JET

MARCH 7, 2011

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Aretha FRANKLIN

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"Now, I have a cleaner, healthier diet." —Aretha Franklin

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CELEBSCENE

MICHAEL GERMANA/LANDOV

DONALD TRAILL/AP

MARTIN LAWRENCE visits *The Late Show With David Letterman* at the Ed Sullivan Theater in New York.

JADEN and **WILLOW SMITH** during the premiere of the new movie from Paramount Pictures *Never Say Never*, held at the Nokia Theatre in Los Angeles.

RHONDA WISE/LANDOV

SEAN 'DIDDY' COMBS watches the Miami Heat game against the Cleveland Cavaliers at the American Airlines Arena in Miami.

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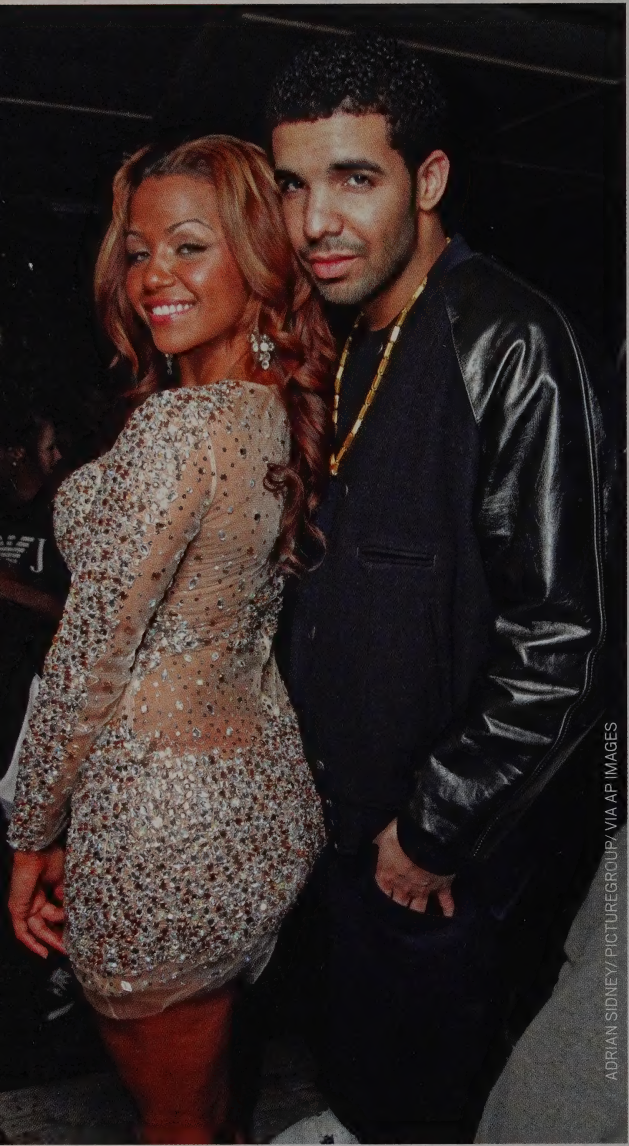


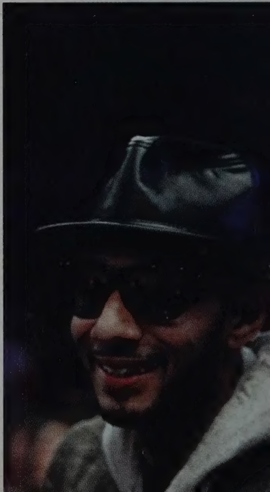
ADRIAN SIDNEY/ PICTUREGROUP/ VIA AP IMAGES

▲ Video model **DOLLICIA BRYAN** and hip-hop artist **DRAKE** at Bryan's birthday celebration at Lollipop Mondays located inside SBE's The Colony Nightclub in Hollywood, Calif.

EPA/ROLEX DELA PEÑA/LANDOV

JANET JACKSON smiles as she arrives at the Manila International Airport in the Philippines. Jackson is in the country for a concert as part of her world tour, "Janet Jackson Number Ones: Up Close and Personal Tour."

▼ **ALICIA KEYS** and husband **SWIZZ BEATZ** watch the New York Knicks play the Miami Heat at Madison Square Garden in New York.



AARP
MOVIES
FOR GROWNUPS

KENNELL KRISTA/SIPA

◀ **DEBBIE ALLEN** and sister **PHYLICIA RASHAD** arrive at the AARP Movies for Grown-ups Awards Gala in Beverly Hills, Calif.

EARL GIBSON III

▲ Jazz saxophonist **KIRK WHALUM** is joined by jazz vocalist **DEE DEE BRIDGEWATER** at the 42nd NAACP Image Awards Luncheon in Los Angeles.

UPI/JOHN ANGELILLO/LANDOV

JET BUZZ IN THE KNOW

TV BUZZ

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ERIC MCCANDLESS

▲ **Forest Whitaker** is bringing the heat on the serial killer drama *Criminal Minds: Suspect Behavior* on Wednesdays at 10 p.m. ET on CBS. He stars as the tough, quick-thinking agent Sam Cooper, who leads an investigative team of FBI agents in the Behavioral Analysis Unit.

CELEBRITY BIRTHDAYS

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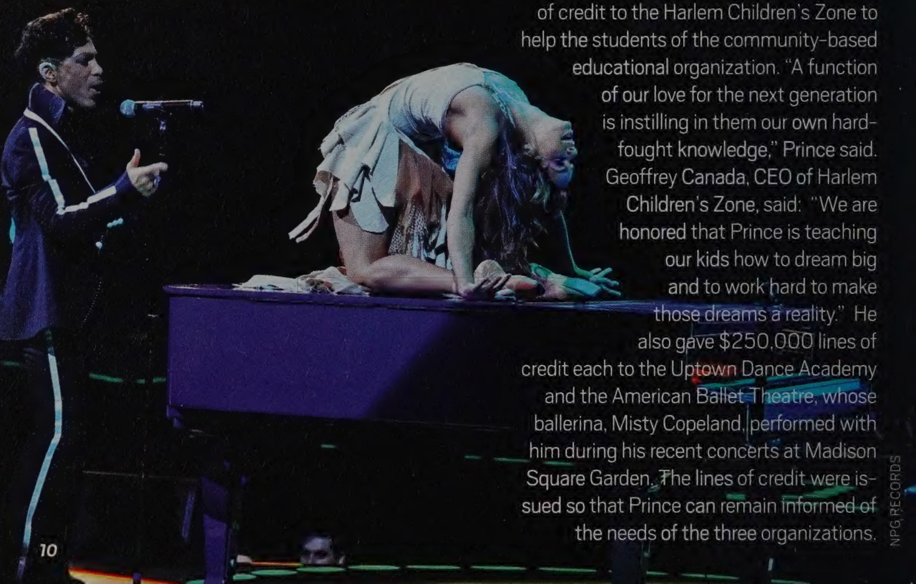

Prince recently donated a $1 million line of credit to the Harlem Children's Zone to help the students of the community-based educational organization. "A function of our love for the next generation is instilling in them our own hard-fought knowledge," Prince said. Geoffrey Canada, CEO of Harlem Children's Zone, said: "We are honored that Prince is teaching our kids how to dream big and to work hard to make those dreams a reality." He also gave $250,000 lines of credit each to the Uptown Dance Academy and the American Ballet Theatre, whose ballerina, Misty Copeland, performed with him during his recent concerts at Madison Square Garden. The lines of credit were issued so that Prince can remain informed of the needs of the three organizations.

NPG RECORDS

MOVIE BUZZ

JOHN P. JOHNSON/TWENTIETH CENTURY FILMS

▲ *Big Mommas: Like Father, Like Son:* **Martin Lawrence** (r) returns as Big Momma in the latest installment of the comedy franchise. This time he brings along his stepson, Trent (actor Brandon T. Jackson) for the adventure. Lawrence, as FBI agent Malcolm Turner, goes undercover at an all-girls school after his stepson witnesses a murder.

BUSINESS BUZZ

Cedric "The Entertainer" shows off his new luxury hat collection, Who Ced? during the 2011 Magic trade show in Las Vegas. The line, which will be in stores in fall/winter, features fine handmade fedoras, new boys, high caps and beanies.

WHO CED
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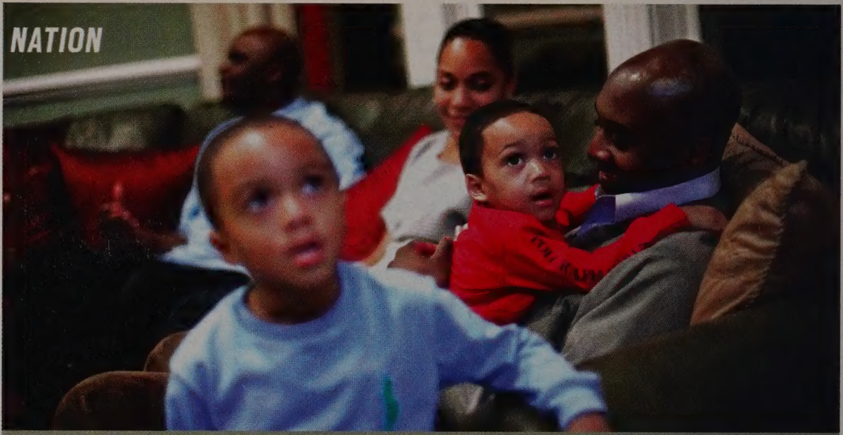
TOUR BUZZ

Musiq Soulchild (r) has replaced **El DeBarge** on **Kem**'s hot *Intimacy* tour. DeBarge checked himself into a drug rehab and canceled all tour dates. "I hate to disappoint my fans but it is necessary for me to take the time to work on me so that I may continue to share my music and my story with everyone," DeBarge said in a statement. The tour, also featuring **Ledisi**, stops in Chicago, Cincinnati, St. Louis, Atlanta, Memphis, Detroit, Charleston, S.C., Cleveland and Louisville, Ky.

MOSES ROBINSON

– Clarence Waldron



DAVID GOLDMAN/AP

Shelton Haynes (r), 33, sits with son Jamir, 2, while visiting the home of Haynes' parents with wife Tiisha, (rear l), and son Jayden (front), 4, in Duluth, Ga. The Haynes family settled in Atlanta after living in New York.

Blacks 'Finding Way Back' South

The Great Migration, the 60-year escape from segregation and racism that brought American Blacks to the North from 1910 to 1970 has reversed course. Better jobs and quality of life in the South are beckoning, as is the lure of something more intangible — a sense of home.

The converts include Shelton Haynes, 33, a housing manager in Atlanta. He grew up in New York and lived in Harlem for many years with his wife and two children before growing weary of the cost of living and hectic pace. After considering other places in the South such as Charlotte, the two settled on Atlanta, where Haynes' brother, sister-in-law and parents now also live.

"We have a great support network of family and friends here, and there is good community involvement, with our kids involved in swimming, tennis and basketball," Haynes said.

With major changes and less racial devastation in the South, "people are finding their way back" South, said Hilary Shelton, director of the NAACP's Washington bureau. "It's no coincidence that the shift is happening as we encounter economic turmoil that is being felt disproportionately among Blacks, such as mortgage foreclosures, loss of jobs and economic devastation in major Northern hubs," Shelton said.

The nation's Black population grew by roughly 1.7 million over the last decade. About 75 percent of that growth occurred in the South — primarily metropolitan areas such as Atlanta, Dallas, Houston, Miami and Charlotte, N.C. That's up from 65 percent in the 1990s, according to the latest census estimates. The gains came primarily at the expense of Northern metro areas such as New York and Chicago, which posted their first declines in Black population since at least 1980.

In all, about 57 percent of U.S. Blacks now live in the South, a jump from the 53 percent share in the 1970s, according to an analysis of census data by William H. Frey, a demographer at the Brookings Institution.

— Associated Press

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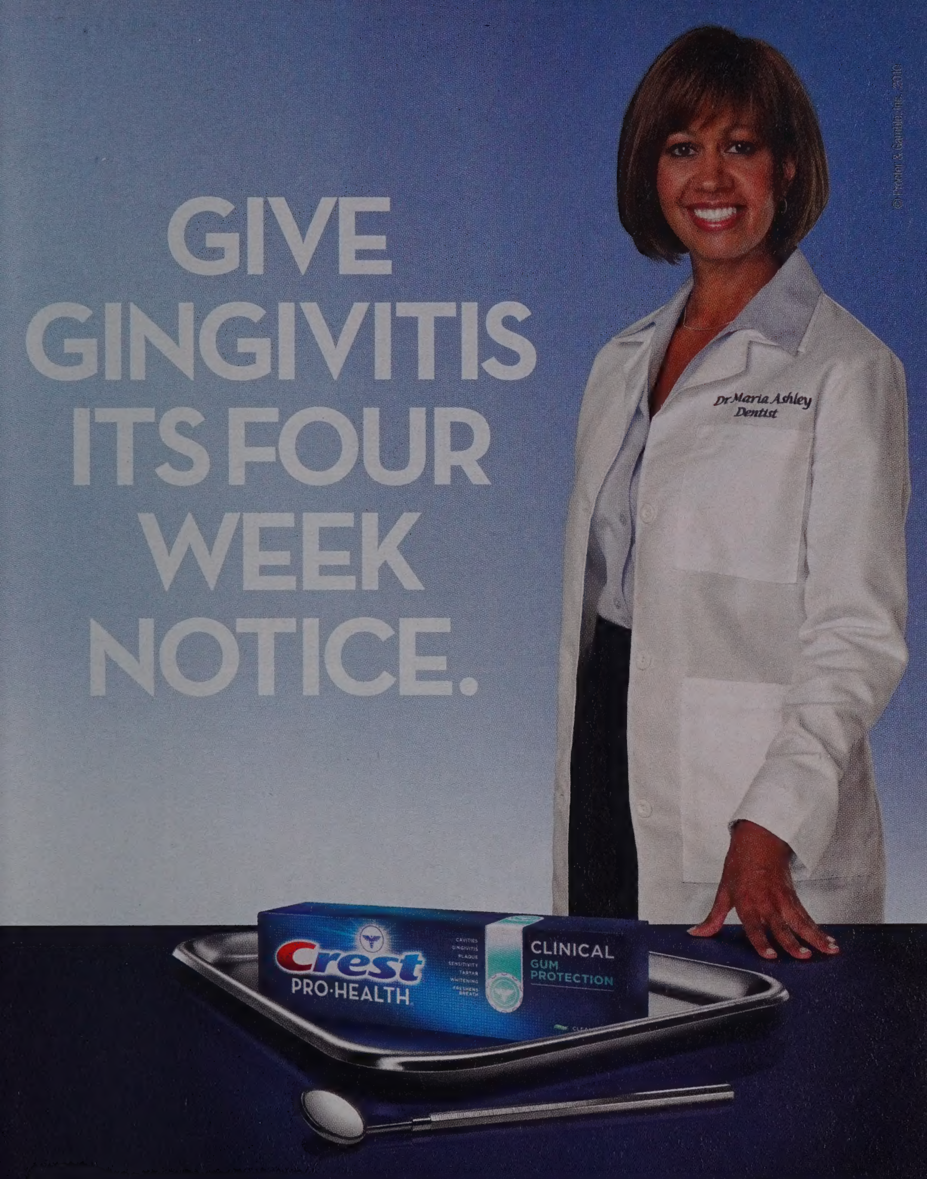
PABLO MARTINEZ MONSIVAIS

HIGH HONORS FROM OBAMA: Bill Russell, the former captain of the Boston Celtics and first Black man to become an NBA head coach, receives from President Obama the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor for contributions to society. Obama also lauded Rep. John Lewis for his life work as a civil rights champion. In 1965, as Lewis led a peaceful march for voting rights from Selma to Montgomery, Ala., he and others were severely beaten by Alabama state troopers in what became known as "Bloody Sunday." The event is credited with helping to spur passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act. Obama said, "Generations from now ... the story of John Lewis will come to mind: an American who knew that change could not wait for some other person or some other time," Obama said. Renowned author and poet Maya Angelou, former President George H.W. Bush and 11 others also received the Presidential Medal of Freedom. — *AP*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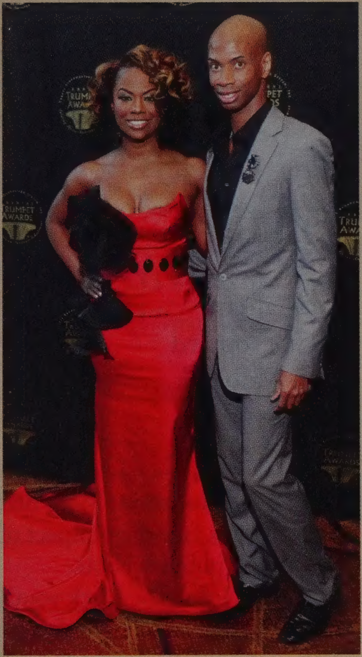
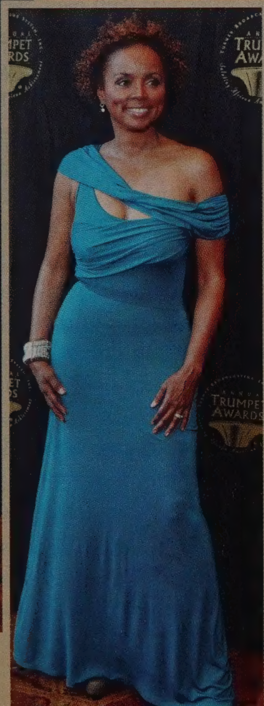
Trumpets Herald Excellence

XERNONA CLAYTON, founder of the Trumpet Awards Foundation, Inc., attends the 19th Annual Trumpet Awards at the Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre in Atlanta. Clayton is the creator of the Trumpet Awards, which highlight accomplishments by African-Americans in areas including the arts, business, medicine and humanitarian work. **JUDGE GREG MATHIS,** one of the event's honorees, attends the awards with his family. *Real Housewives Of Atlanta* star **KANDI BURRUSS** and fashion designer **RECO CHAPPLE** were also on hand for the celebration, which paid tribute to actor **RICHARD ROUNDTREE**. **REV. JESSE JACKSON**, along with **JACQUIE HOOD MARTIN** and TV commentator **ROLAND MARTIN,** attend the event. Celebrities on hand include actress **DEBBI MORGAN,** VH1's *Football Wives*' **CHANITA FOSTER** and TV star **NIECY NASH.** Other Trumpet Award honorees this year include the Rev. Al Sharpton and Attorney General Eric Holder. The awards will air on TVOne in April.

Photos by Paras Griffin /Landov





INSIDE POLITICS

What African-Americans Can Learn From Egypt

DAMON MOORE PHOTOGRAPHY

SOPHIA A. NELSON is a political commentator, lawyer and author.

I was on a political panel the day after young men and women of Egypt toppled their longtime President Hosni Mubarak, and the host asked, "What are the lessons for African-Americans here in America?"

Can this generation learn something from the millions of young people in Egypt who peacefully but forcefully protested for weeks to bring down a 30-year political empire, tame a military force and engender the support of the world? Yes!

Despite the number of African-Americans who have made it into the middle class over the past three decades, too many in our communities are left behind. We still are disproportionately poor, disenfranchised and suffer because of health disparities. And far too many of our young men and now women are in some way involved in the penal system in this nation.

Let's consider some key issues that need to be addressed in the next five to 10 years.

Federal deficit and Social Security crisis: It could be catastrophic for Black Americans who are dependent upon some federal government programs.

Education: More Black students face the prospect of failing public schools.

Jobs: The Black youth/teen rate of unemployment this past year in many cities was well over 50 percent.

These three issues alone are worthy of young adults' tweets on the social network Twitter, Facebook posts and letting voices be heard, as youth in Egypt did. But too many are absorbed in the Internet, texting and e-mailing jokes and videos instead of using these powerful tools to spur change for their community.

The young adults in Egypt have provided a model of inspiration that you can follow — a model so powerful that protests across the Mideast, in places including Jordan, Tunisia, Libya and Yemen, were ignited to demand change from their governments. We are long overdue in America for a new Civil Rights Revolution. //

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PAUL TOPLE/AKRON BEACON JOURNAL/AP

RALLY FOR OHIO MOM: Rev. Al Sharpton greets Akron school board president Rev. Dr. Curtis Walker Sr. before speaking at the National Action Network's "Rally for Justice for Kelley Williams-Bolar" at a church in Akron, Ohio. Williams-Bolar, who was convicted of a felony for using her father's address to enroll her children in a neighboring school district, should be "saluted, not arrested," Sharpton said. The 40-year-old teacher's aide said her primary concern was safety. She served nine days in jail for records tampering but plans to appeal her conviction. The felony record could rule out her goal of becoming a teacher. Amid continued public outcry over her arrest, Republican Gov. John Kasich has asked the state parole board to determine whether the felony conviction was an appropriate punishment. *— AP*

Obama Birth Certificate Bill Tabled

A proposal to sell copies of President Obama's birth records to anyone for $100 died when it didn't get a hearing before deadline for bills to advance to their final committees in the Hawaii Legislature.

House Health Committee Chairman Ryan Yamane said he won't consider the legislation because he doesn't think it's appropriate to sell private information to the public — even if it's the president's birth documentation.

"We shouldn't take knee-jerk reactions. Just because there are these people who want this information, that doesn't mean we should change our state statute so a private, personal record could be accessible for $100," said Yamane, a Democrat.

Hawaii's privacy laws bar the release of birth records unless the requester is someone with a tangible interest, such as a close family member.

So-called "birthers" claim there's no proof Obama was born in the United States, and he is therefore ineligible to be president. Many of the skeptics question whether he was actually born in Kenya, his father's home country. *— Associated Press*

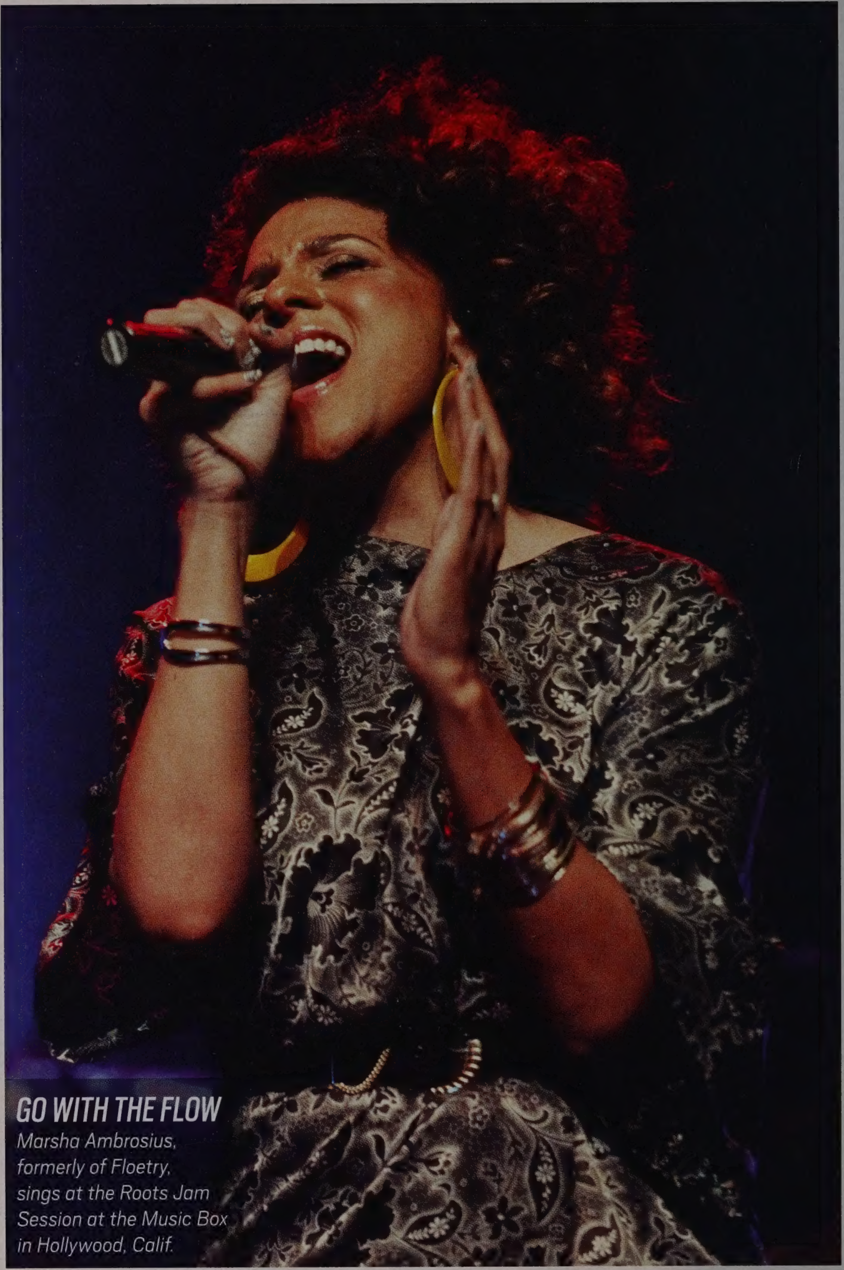
RED HOT

Actress Taraji P. Henson on the runway in The Heart Truth's 2011 Red Dress Collection Fashion Show at Mercedes-Benz Fall Fashion Week at Lincoln Center in New York.

ANDREW GOMBERT / EPA/Landov

BROWN IN BLACK
Chris Brown performing on Saturday Night Live.

DANA EDELSON/NBC



GO WITH THE FLOW

Marsha Ambrosius, formerly of Floetry, sings at the Roots Jam Session at the Music Box in Hollywood, Calif.

ADRIAN SIDNEY/AP

GEORGINA RAMOS, of Grand Prairie, Texas, loves to dance, watch movies and read.

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CHRIS McBROWN

'I AM JUST THANKFUL FOR GOD'S GRACE'

BY CLARENCE WALDRON

Aretha Franklin is standing in her spacious kitchen as she tells JET what she bought at the grocery store earlier that day. She's got "a lot of good stuff," she says, rattling off the ingredients for what she calls "an Aretha salad." Radishes, tomatoes, red onions, olives, carrots, just a little shredded cheese, topped off with ranch dressing and a little lemon. "It is just too good when you get down to the last third of a salad — what I call the 'heart' of the salad, when all of those seasonings come together," she exclaims.

PHOTOS BY MONICA MORGAN

Aretha Franklin celebrates the new chapter in her life with her sons, Eddie and Teddy, at a pre-Grammy reception near Detroit. JET was the only media granted access to the event.

Franklin receives best wishes from her son, Kecalf and his wife, Kafi, during the reception.

PHOTOS BY MONICA MORGAN

Franklin thanks McDonald's franchise owner Ron Molten and his wife, Lisolee, for hosting the reception in her honor.

At this point in her life, she prefers "organic food, all-natural food," and "different things free of gluten," she says.

"It's a new chapter in my life," she declares. "It's a brand new me — I am still the same but with some changes."

Franklin's fans worldwide saw the "slimmed-down Aretha" and "the pink gown" she wore in a taped greeting for the Grammy Awards. She has lost 25 pounds, she reveals, since a Dec. 2 surgery for an undisclosed illness that she has not discussed publicly. Franklin announced last year that she was canceling all concert dates until May at her doctor's request.

"I am not one to do a lot of talking about my personal health or business," she told JET earlier this year during an exclusive interview. But she assured fans, "The problem has been resolved. The doctors are satisfied, I am satisfied, my family is satisfied."

Franklin reiterated to JET that she's not discussing the topic. "I've pretty much said all there is to say. I've left all that behind me."

Today, she is focused on making healthy choices for her life.

"I go to the healthier foods that are less chemically treated," Franklin says. "Now, I have a cleaner, healthier diet. I am drinking lots of water to get rid of the toxins in my body. It's a natural flushing. Water flushes your system and is also very good for your skin."

And with the new weight loss, she says, "I am going to get a little sassier. Yes, I am go-

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ing to get a little sassier now."

Franklin recalls her old eating habits: "I used to have hamburgers coming and going, especially when I was on the road. Now, occasionally I will still have that quarter pounder because I love fast food, but you have to keep it to a minimum. I am now opting for salads and just healthier lunches."

The Queen of Soul is surrounded by a few of her family members —(front, l-r) niece Sabrina Owens and cousin Brenda Corbett, cousin Henry Lowe and family friend Willie Wilkerson.

This time in her life finds the Queen of Soul working out like she never has before. She does about 30 minutes of cardio three times a week. "If I can work in that fourth day, I'll do it." She has a personal trainer and likes walking on the treadmill at her suburban Detroit home and on the track at a health club.

She remains under her doctors' care. "They want me to build up my stamina and strength so that I am ready for my concert tour in the spring."

Franklin said she appreciated the all-star musical tribute she received during the Grammys from Jennifer Hudson, Yolanda Adams, Christina Aguilera, Martina McBride and Florence Welch. "I couldn't wait until they came on. I sat right in front of the TV with a cup of banana pudding and loved every minute of it. Everyone was wonderful, Jennifer, Christina, everyone. And they looked fabulous. But I especially loved Yolanda. She put it where it was. Bravo, ladies."

Franklin says she's celebrating her March 25 birthday with a private soiree with family and friends in New York. "A lady doesn't tell her age," she laughs.

Her birthday wish is to

drop one more dress size. She has already dropped three. "By my birthday I will be a 16 — that's my birthday wish, and I just want to continue my super maintained health."

She says, "I look wonderful to myself at size 14 or 16. But 16 is OK, too. I will rest my case at 16." And she notes that, "Brothers like it and I like 'giving him something he can feel,' she says with a laugh, referring to her '70s soul classic from the movie *Sparkle*.

A 12-CD box set, *Take A Look: Aretha Franklin Complete On Columbia*, drops March 22, and it includes all of the music she recorded on the Columbia Records label from 1960-1965 before she switched to Atlantic Records and was crowned the Queen of Soul.

The box set marks the 50th anniversary of her pop-soul recording career.

"I played it myself here at the house. I love all of the cuts. I sang along to the music. I still knew all the words. It brings back special memories. It is so special to still be doing music 50 years later."

Her long-awaited CD of brand-new music, *Aretha: A Woman Falling Out Of Love*, is set for release in May and will be available at Walmart.

The singer's celebrity friends and fans are rejoicing in her recovery as they count the days to her return to the concert stage.

Longtime family friend Rev. Jesse Jackson prayed with her during her illness and accompanied her to a recent Detroit Pistons game in the city.

"I am excited, delighted and thrilled that she has pulled through with such an amazing strength and faith. Through even the most difficult time, her faith shines through like a light in darkness. She has deep, deep religious roots. And the amazing thing about Aretha is that she remains current. She is still creating new music and releasing CDs. She is superior in her craftsmanship and her values."

Scholar Michael Eric Dyson visited Franklin during the holiday season and recently told JET: "I am so thrilled to see the Queen of Soul on the mend and back in public view. I can't wait to hear that majestic voice once again cascading down on us in full force ... It was amazing to see her looking

Determined to keep the weight off, the soul legend goes for a mile on the track. "I need one more dress size down," she says. At right, an avid basketball fan, Aretha Franklin joins in the fun with Southfield, Mich., Mayor Brenda Lawrence and Rev. Jesse Jackson at a recent Detroit Pistons game against the Miami Heat at the Palace in Michigan. Her tunes Respect *and* I Say A Little Prayer *were played during the game.*

> *“Trust in God. He will make a way for you, if you try Him. Surely He is able. I never doubted that for a moment.”*

so beautiful and regal on television during the Grammys broadcast.”

Dyson adds, “When she finally makes her first appearance in public to sing again, I want to be right on the front row cheering her on ...”

Recalling her road back to the spotlight, Franklin says, “I am just thankful for God’s grace and people’s prayers. I know that He is able to carry you right on through.

“Don’t be discouraged if you are having a hard time — hang tough,” she says. “Trust in God. He will make a way for you, if you try Him. Surely He is able. I never doubted that for a moment.”//

AP

AISHA OBUOBI

As a little girl in Accra, Ghana, Aisha Obuobi grew up watching her grandmother, a seamstress, at her sewing machine, creating beautiful clothes made with colorful African print fabric. Little Aisha would play with the scraps of material, designing mini collections for her favorite dolls. Now, Obuobi is the 25-year-old founder of Christie Brown, an award-winning clothing line launched in 2008 and named after her grandmother. It has become known in the fashion capitals of the African continent for its unique, vibrant, contemporary look.

SIMON DEINER / SDR PHOTO

What is Christie Brown about?

When I launched my label in 2008, there wasn't much experimentation being done with African prints; the material was mostly used in very traditional ways and I always envisioned more interesting, modern designs in which to incorporate the gorgeous prints. I wanted to cultivate fresh appeal for African prints; I wanted to celebrate them in a fresh way.

Where do you get your ideas?

I'm inspired by my heritage, by my environment, by the places, objects and people surrounding me daily. Often, I'll walk through a bustling market and a host of ideas will spring from the things I see — the way a woman has tied her head scarf, the patterns on another's skirt, the colors of the materials laid out before me.

Is there an African approach to style?

Africa comprises a whole range of diverse cultures and traditional styles so I don't know that there's a single, African approach to style and fashion. I personally focus on creating beautiful pieces, which celebrate different elements of the African prints and styles of dress I see, while retaining international appeal. Women from across the world would look fantastic in Christie Brown designs.

How do you plan to expand?

We've trained and retained more expert craftsmen. And after two years of success in Ghana, the brand has penetrated the Nigerian market with a Nigerian-based partner. We are now stocked exclusively at the luxury boutique Temple Muse in Nigeria and the pieces can be purchased online at myasho.com. Plus, we're looking to begin selling our accessories line in the U.S.

— Karyn D. Collins

SIMON DEINER / SDR PHOTO

HUMANE SOCIETY TO URBAN YOUTH: SAY NO TO DOGFIGHTING

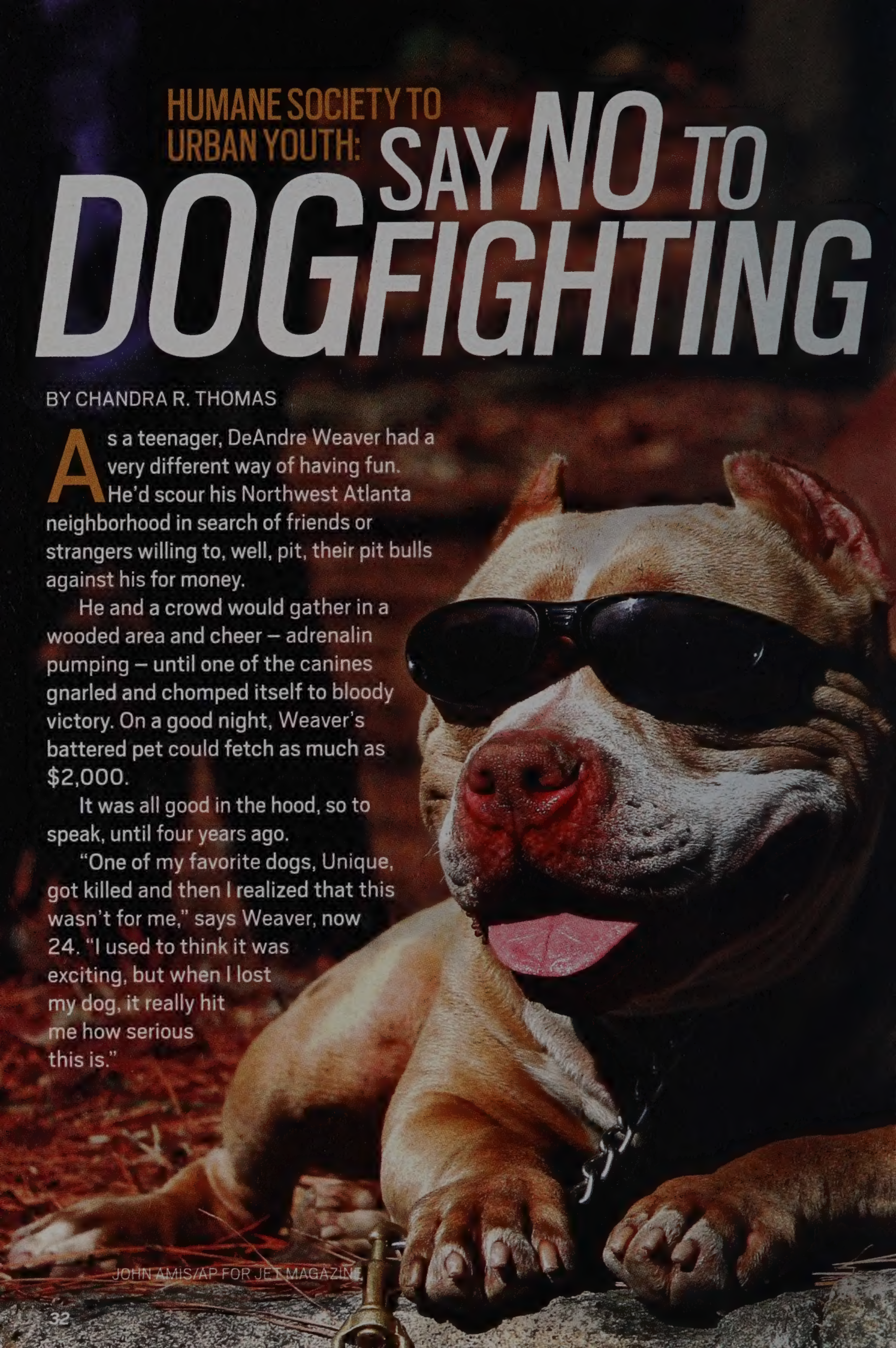
BY CHANDRA R. THOMAS

As a teenager, DeAndre Weaver had a very different way of having fun. He'd scour his Northwest Atlanta neighborhood in search of friends or strangers willing to, well, pit, their pit bulls against his for money.

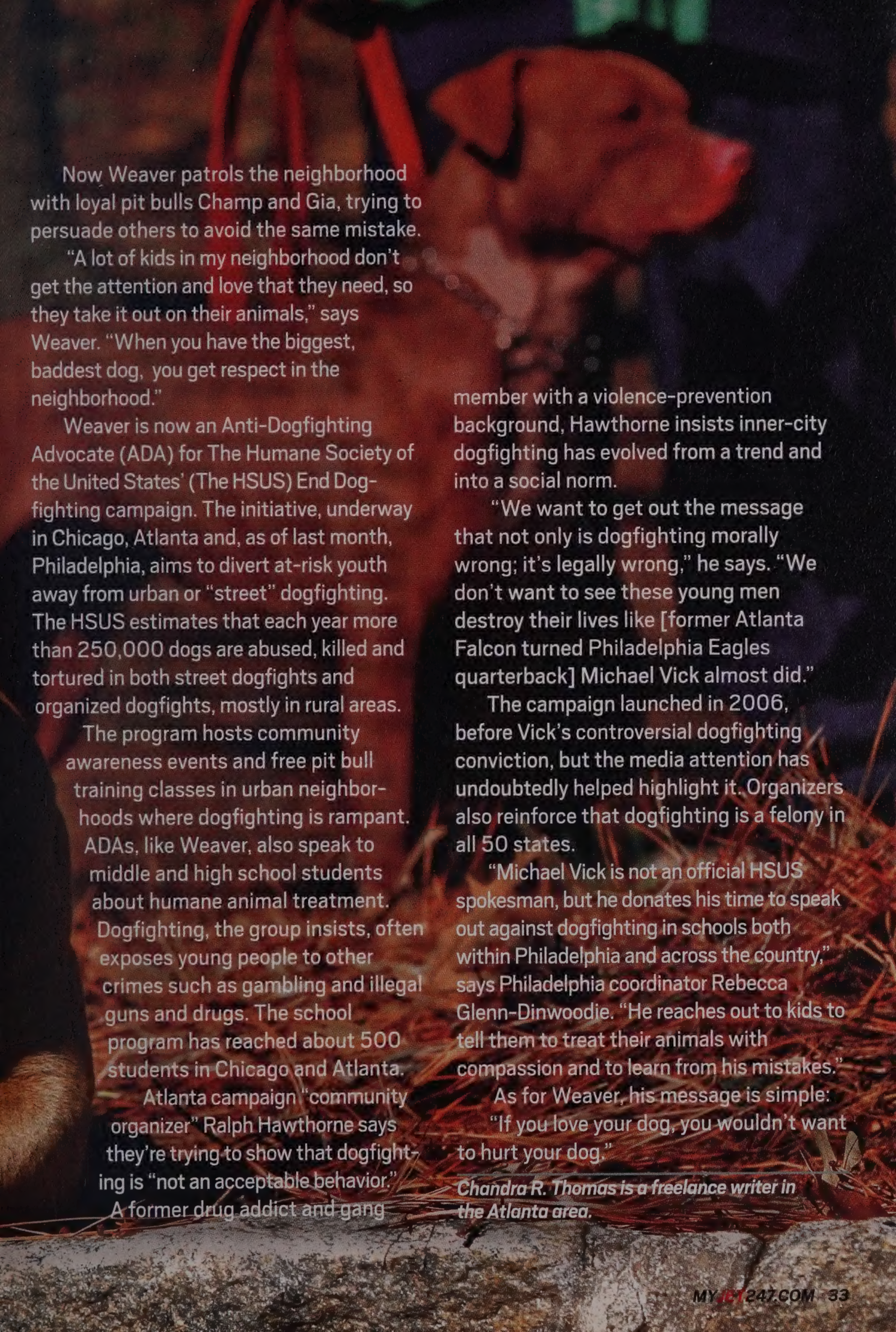
He and a crowd would gather in a wooded area and cheer – adrenalin pumping – until one of the canines gnarled and chomped itself to bloody victory. On a good night, Weaver's battered pet could fetch as much as $2,000.

It was all good in the hood, so to speak, until four years ago.

"One of my favorite dogs, Unique, got killed and then I realized that this wasn't for me," says Weaver, now 24. "I used to think it was exciting, but when I lost my dog, it really hit me how serious this is."



JOHN AMIS/AP FOR JET MAGAZINE



Now Weaver patrols the neighborhood with loyal pit bulls Champ and Gia, trying to persuade others to avoid the same mistake.

"A lot of kids in my neighborhood don't get the attention and love that they need, so they take it out on their animals," says Weaver. "When you have the biggest, baddest dog, you get respect in the neighborhood."

Weaver is now an Anti-Dogfighting Advocate (ADA) for The Humane Society of the United States' (The HSUS) End Dogfighting campaign. The initiative, underway in Chicago, Atlanta and, as of last month, Philadelphia, aims to divert at-risk youth away from urban or "street" dogfighting. The HSUS estimates that each year more than 250,000 dogs are abused, killed and tortured in both street dogfights and organized dogfights, mostly in rural areas.

The program hosts community awareness events and free pit bull training classes in urban neighborhoods where dogfighting is rampant. ADAs, like Weaver, also speak to middle and high school students about humane animal treatment. Dogfighting, the group insists, often exposes young people to other crimes such as gambling and illegal guns and drugs. The school program has reached about 500 students in Chicago and Atlanta.

Atlanta campaign "community organizer" Ralph Hawthorne says they're trying to show that dogfighting is "not an acceptable behavior." A former drug addict and gang member with a violence-prevention background, Hawthorne insists inner-city dogfighting has evolved from a trend and into a social norm.

"We want to get out the message that not only is dogfighting morally wrong; it's legally wrong," he says. "We don't want to see these young men destroy their lives like [former Atlanta Falcon turned Philadelphia Eagles quarterback] Michael Vick almost did."

The campaign launched in 2006, before Vick's controversial dogfighting conviction, but the media attention has undoubtedly helped highlight it. Organizers also reinforce that dogfighting is a felony in all 50 states.

"Michael Vick is not an official HSUS spokesman, but he donates his time to speak out against dogfighting in schools both within Philadelphia and across the country," says Philadelphia coordinator Rebecca Glenn-Dinwoodie. "He reaches out to kids to tell them to treat their animals with compassion and to learn from his mistakes."

As for Weaver, his message is simple: "If you love your dog, you wouldn't want to hurt your dog."

Chandra R. Thomas is a freelance writer in the Atlanta area.

'Dork Diaries' Author Tackles Conflicts Of Youth

MELODY K. HOFFMAN

Rachel Renée Russell

Rachel Renée Russell, the author of the New York Times best-selling children's series *Dork Diaries* says her transition from being a Michigan bankruptcy attorney to children's author is her own fairy tale.

She says her dream of becoming a writer brewed for many years before she took her first step.

"I have two daughters, they're both recently graduated from college right now, but (when growing up), sometimes they would come home and they have crushes or there would be mean girls or they insisted a teacher hated them," Russell remembers. "I said I would put this in a book.

"A lot of it was just funny and heart-warming," Russell, 51, says. "It wasn't until 2006 [that] I actually sat down and began putting together some ideas."

But, it was her sudden divorce and a financial setback that pushed her toward a full-time writing career.

"I was struggling trying to make the bankruptcy practice work and I thought I would take out this manuscript and dust it off and continue to try to make that work too. I figured if I could get it sold, at least I would know I would have an income."

Russell sent her manuscript to more than a dozen firms and landed a literary agent 2-3 weeks later.

Her first book, *Dork Diaries: Tales From A Not-So-Fabulous Life*, was released in June 2009 and it quickly landed on the New York Times best-seller list for 32 weeks.

The second book, *Dork Diaries: Tales*

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From A Not-So-Popular Party Girl, has been on the list 29 weeks.

Through comical sketches, *Dork Diaries* chronicles the life of eighth-grader Nikki Maxwell and her conflicts with mean girls, her crushes, parents, school competitions and parties.

"I can channel a 14-year-old so that another 14-year-old thinks she's authentic," Russell says. "Actually, when I visited (publishing house) Simon & Schuster, half of the staff were shocked because they were not expecting a 50-year-old, 200-pound Black woman to walk in the door," she says with a laugh.

Russell, whose inspirations have been books such as *Harriet The Spy*, *Princess Diaries* and *Diary Of A Wimpy Kid*, says her ideas still come from "real-life experiences."

"*Dork Diaries* is just the goals of what any person would have — man, woman or child — which is just wanting to fit in, wanting people to love you, wanting to be successful, wanting to be accepted, and wanting to feel confident and comfortable in your own skin."

Rachel Renée Russell
DORK diaries
Tales from a NOT-SO-Fabulous Life
The New York Times Bestseller

Dork Diaries: Tales From A Not-So-Fabulous Life, *Rachel Renée Russell's first book, won the 2010 Children's Choice Book of the Year Award for the 5th/6th Grade division.*

Russell is working to finish her third book, *Dork Diaries: Tales From A Not-So-Talented Pop Star*, which will be released in June. She says she would love to follow Nikki Maxwell and her diverse best friends Zoey and Chloe (all three girls are White, Black and Hispanic) as they grew up.

"I had seriously thought if we get to book 12 and she's finishing middle school and going into high school, I'd love to continue. ... I would love to mature her a little bit."

There are more than 2 million copies of *Dork Diaries* books in print in the United States. The series is also popular internationally, sold in 18 countries and translated into 13 different languages.

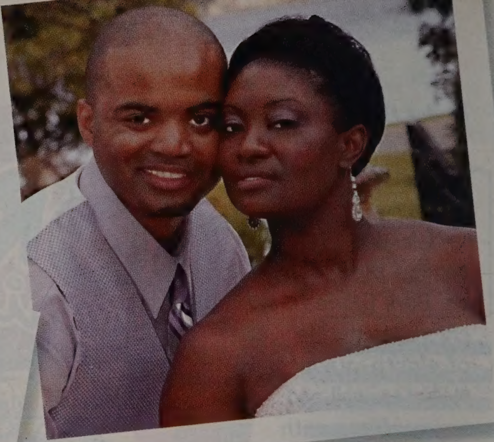
"I think it's popular because [everyone] feels insecure," says Russell, who hopes to see the books make the leap to a TV series or to a movie. "*Dork Diaries* offers the fact that if we look inside ourselves and learn to love ourselves, we can be happy with who we are and feel fulfilled."//

TO HAVE & TO HOLD

▲ Karensa Polk & Ken Foxx

Wedding: Bellagio in Las Vegas
Honeymoon: Cruise to Bahamas and Grand Cayman Islands
Home: Los Angeles

Karensa works for the Department of Defense. Ken is a nuclear contractor. The couple met at the University of Southern Mississippi on Pride Field in 2003.



▲ Lashay Antionette Brown & Curtis Lee Harris

Wedding: Southside Church of God in Christ in Jacksonville, Fla. **Honeymoon**: Daytona Beach, Fla.
Home: Jacksonville

Lashay is a registered nurse at Shands Hospital. Curtis is a correctional officer with the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office. The couple met while working together at Shands Hospital. Curtis proposed exactly eight months later.

▲ Erica Looney & Tatum Polk

Wedding: RUI Hotel & Resort in Montego Bay, Jamaica
Honeymoon: Montego Bay **Home**: St. Louis

Erica is a store manager for Man Alive. Tatum is a marketing consultant for KrossOver Marketing. Tatum proposed at Erica's 25th birthday celebration.

Latecia D. McAlister & Jerwayne G. Jones ▸

Wedding: Top of the Elk's Lodge in Honolulu **Honeymoon**: Las Vegas **Home**: Prattville, Ala.

Both students at American Military University, Latecia is a technical sergeant in the U.S. Air Force and Jerwayne is a sergeant 1st class in the U.S. Army. The two met while being stationed in Hawaii. The theme of their purple wedding ceremony was "Butterflies & Bling."

◂ Nicole Darlene Ligon & Dr. William Ira Crisp II

Wedding: Christian Life Center in South Bend, Ind. **Honeymoon**: Maui and Oahu, Hawaii
Home: Dallas

Nicole is a registered nurse at Children's Medical Center of Dallas. William is a nuclear pharmacist for Cardinal Health. Nicole and William met and fell in love while attending Purdue University.

Patricia Simmons Carr & Joseph Carr ▸

50th Wedding Anniversary

Celebration: Oasis of the Sea Cruise to St. Maarten, Bahamas and St. Thomas
Home: Fort Washington, Md.

Mrs. Carr retired as a U.S. postal manager after 34 years of service. Mr. Carr retired after 30 years as a U.S. Postal Service mail carrier. They have three sons (one deceased) and six grandchildren. Their devoted marriage is about "3 Cs"– communicate, committed and cooperate.

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VALERIE GOODLOE

CHAMPION OF HOPE: Los Angeles Mayor **Antonio Villaraigosa** presents former boxer **"Sugar" Ray Leonard** with the Hope of Los Angeles Award with Councilman **Bernard Parks** (l) and Councilman **Herb Wesson** in City Hall. Leonard was honored as a sports icon and for his philanthropic work for charities such as the Children's Miracle Network Hospitals, the Dream Foundation and the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation Walk for a Cure.

RICKEY BROWN

TOP MAN: Chris Tucker was named Man Of The Year by West Angeles CDC (Community Development Corporation) at the Regent Beverly Wilshire Hotel in Beverly Hills, Calif. West Angeles CDC was founded in early 1994 as an outreach program of West Angeles Church of God in Christ, where Bishop Charles Blake is pastor and Lula Ballton is the CDC chairman.

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Drive one.

Festival Of Film's Finest

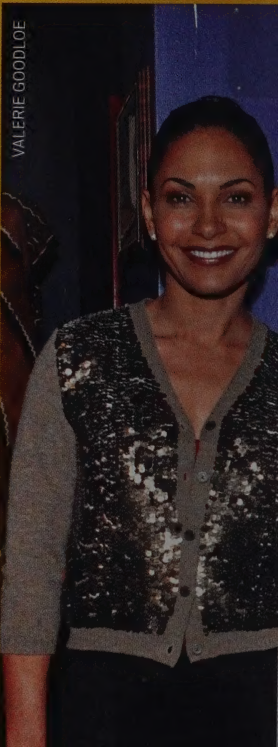
BY MIKI TURNER

The 19th Annual Pan African Film & Arts Festival kicks off, showcasing Russ Parr's romantic comedy *35 & Ticking* at the Culver Plaza Theater in Culver City, Calif. The film, which was written and directed by Parr, is the story of a group of friends striving to achieve their dream lives.

For some, that means finding the perfect mate. For others it means the pitter-patter of little feet. Most of the film's stars attended the premiere, including: Nicole Ari Parker, Kevin Hart, Keith Richardson, Tamala Jones, Meagan Good, Kym Whitley (who is also an executive producer), Dondre Whitfield, Clifton Powell, Lunell and Aaron D. Spear. Among the other celebrities present were: Judy Pace, Beverly Todd, Vanessa Williams, Boris Kodjoe, Salli Richardson-Whitfield, Nate Parker (the festival's official host) and actors Akosua Busia and Jimmy-Jean Louis, both of whom have two films in the festival. A Night of Tribute honors Phylicia Rashad.

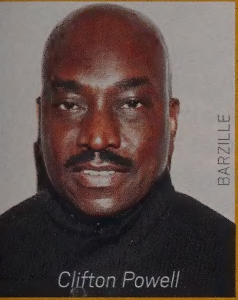
Jimmy-Jean Louis and Julius Amedume

VALERIE GOODLOE


VALERIE GOODLOE

Kym Whitley

BARZILLE


Clifton Powell

BARZILLE

Salli Richardson-Whitfield and husband Dondre Whitfield

Akosua Busia and Vanessa Williams

VALERIE GOODLOE

‘MOOZ-LUM’

Exploring The Life Of An American Muslim On Film

BY DENNIS MALCOLM BYRON

In 2004, aspiring director Qasim “Q” Basir happened to cross paths with one of the best in the profession, Spike Lee, in his Detroit hometown.

GEOFFREY BLACK

Basir (l) asked him for guidance on how to succeed in the industry.

Lee simply replied, “Write a good script, man.”

Basir, now 30, followed Lee’s simple advice, which led him to eventually write and direct his first full-feature film, *MOOZ-lum*, starring Nia Long *(Love Jones, Are We There Yet?)*, Danny Glover *(The Color Purple, Dreamgirls)*, Evan Ross *(ATL, Pride)* and Roger Guenveur Smith *(Do The Right Thing, American Gangster)*. Partnering with AMC and Eventful, the film was released nationally in February.

MOOZ-lum is based on the trials of Tariq Mahdi (Ross), a Muslim-American boy who struggles to find his identity while enduring the forces of his strict father, other Muslims, and non-Muslims who are pulling him in different directions.

Tariq enters college as a freshman around the time of the 9/11 terror attacks. Basir, who said *MOOZ-lum* is about “75 percent” autobiographical, explained, “It was difficult because there were things that I revisited during the writing of this screenplay I didn’t even know still existed within me. But at the end of the day, I looked very deeply into what it means to be a Muslim.”

Basir was able to land a stellar cast who believed in his vision to help erase ignorance about the Muslim faith in America.

Long, who is known for her lighter roles, loved Basir’s script and accepted the challenge of a more serious role as Tariq’s mother.

“I said ‘yes’ immediately and wanted to make sure I represented Muslim women properly,” Long said. “A piece like this sheds light on an area of life that we may not really know and have never seen portrayed on the screen, and that is what really attracted me to the part.”

According to the film’s Web site, *MOOZ-lum* embraces four words: “Forgiveness, Tolerance, Hope and Identity.” Basir said, “I hope this film is well-received and it opens minds, because right now, there is an immense amount of ignorance surrounding Islam and Muslim people and I just want to put a human face on it.”

Dennis Malcolm Byron is a freelance writer in Atlanta.

Disney Star 'Spunky' In New Role

BY MELODY K. HOFFMAN

Rising star Madison Pettis loves her role as Izzy in Disney Junior's new animated series, *Jake And The Never Land Pirates*, because she and the character she voices are a lot alike.

"We're both spunky and creative... and we both love to solve mysteries," reveals 12-year-old Pettis, who plays one of the adventurous and courageous kid pirates who fly around with magic pixie dust.

Born and raised in Arlington, Texas, Pettis is best known for her starring role in Disney's film *The Game Plan* opposite Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson (which was her very first movie audition). Since then, she also has starred opposite Will Smith in *Seven Pounds* and gone on to become even more of a household name with her co-starring role as Sophie in Disney's hit series, *Cory In The House*.

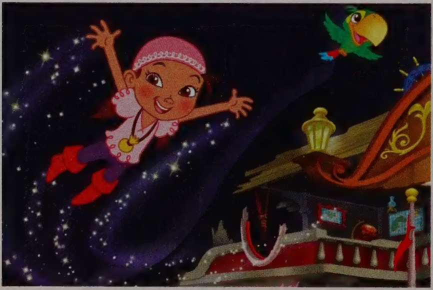
"A lot of people know me from the *Game Plan* or *Cory In The House* and I was like 7 or 8 when I did that, so a lot of times when people see me now they're like, 'Wow, you're so grown up.'"

Pettis began taking dance classes at age 4 and started modeling and appearing in commercials when she was 5. She says she was inspired to act by her favorite shows *That's So Raven* and *Cheetah Girls* and she and her family eventually moved to Los Angeles to pursue her entertainment career.

The seventh-grader, who loves to write, dance and watch *Law & Order*, says what's "cool" about being young and having a lot of fans is that she "can inspire other kids to volunteer for charity and do public service."

"Through Twitter and Facebook, I get to bring attention to several causes that I care about and that are close to my heart ... (like) the USO. My older brother is in the Army, so I know what it feels like to have a family member deployed and how scary that can be. I hope what I do will motivate other kids to find ways to give back, too."//

Madison Pettis voices the role of Izzy, a bright and creative kid pirate in Disney Junior's new animated series, Jake And The Never Land Pirates.



RICK ROWELL/DISNEY

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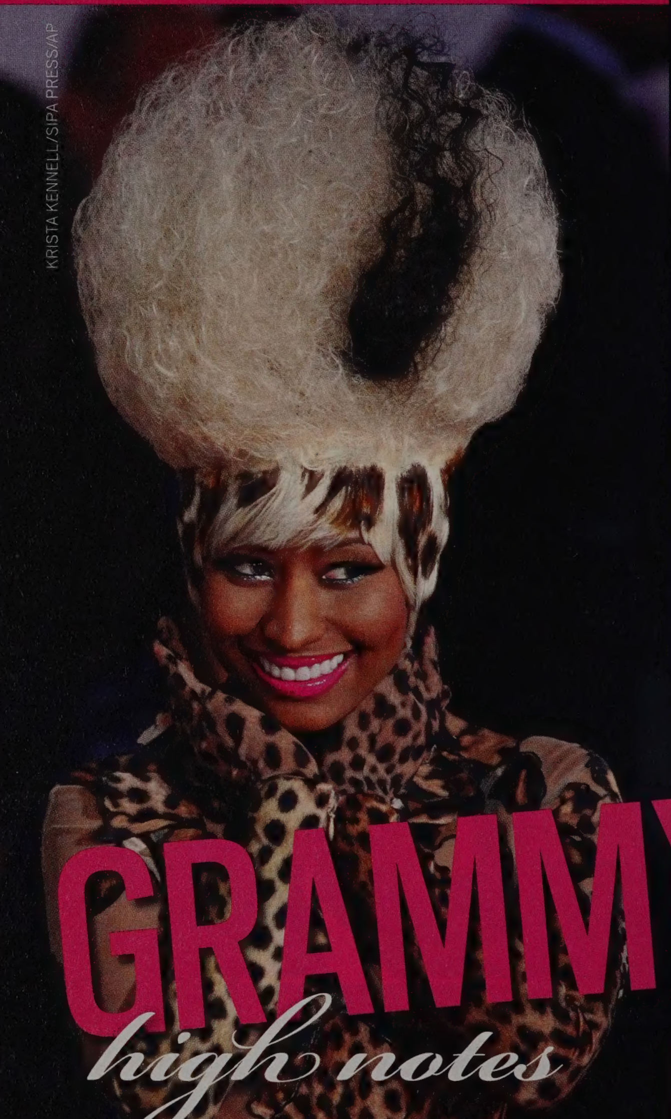


KRISTA KENNELL/SIPA PRESS/AP

MATT SAYLES/AP

GRAMMY

high notes

Rap star Nicki Minaj arrives at the GRAMMY music awards in Los An "I love when people say, 'What was she wearing?' she s Staples picked up the first Grammy of her career, for icana Album, for *You Are Not Alone.*

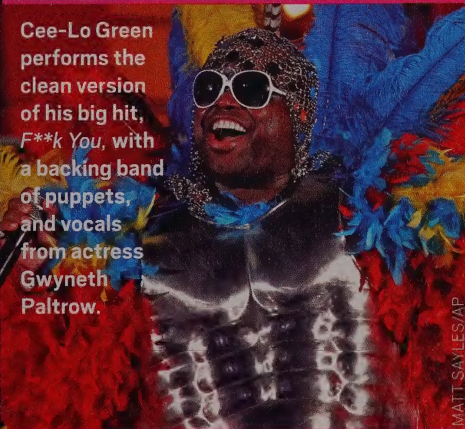
piled from AP

Rihanna performs *What's My Name* with Drake.

Acclaimed jazz singer and bassist Esperanza Spalding wins the award for Best New Artist, the first jazz artist to win the award.

JAE C. HONG/AP

MATT SAYLES/AP

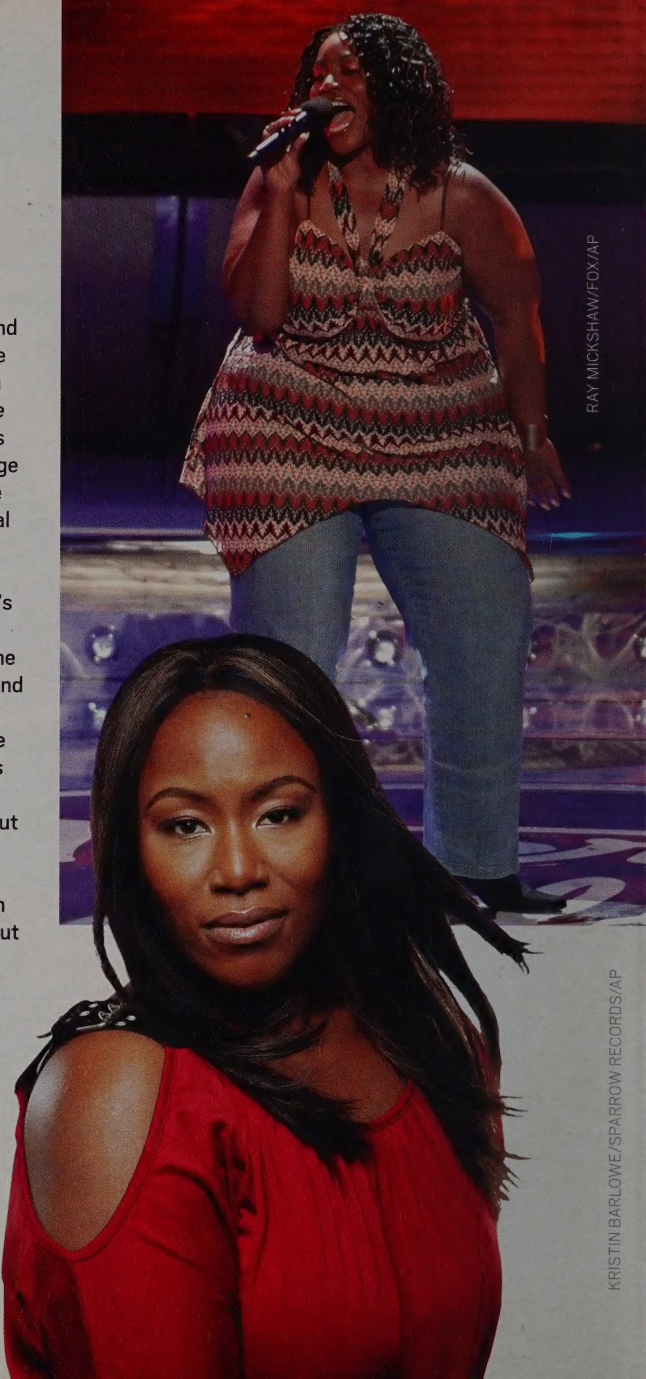


Cee-Lo Green performs the clean version of his big hit, *Fk You*, with a backing band of puppets, and vocals from actress Gwyneth Paltrow.**

MATT SAYLES/AP

EX-*IDOL* FINALIST'S TRANSFORMATION:

Former *American Idol* finalist Mandisa Hundley finished in the top 10 on the popular show (top) and is now planning to release her third gospel album on April 5, called *What If We Were Real.* But as it turns out, her biggest life change came after the show. She embarked on an emotional weight loss journey two years ago and has since lost 90 pounds. Mandisa's struggles fueled her new music. "Where I was at the beginning of this album and where I ended up are two very different places," she told the Associated Press in an e-mail. "I realized that I had only talked about how great things were. I never let people in when they were not. It was then that I decided I'd talk about the bad things, too," she said. The result is what Mandisa calls her most honest record to date. Mandisa is on her way to losing 100 pounds but said she doesn't have a goal weight. "My only goal is to be healthy physically, spiritually and emotionally. That is a lifelong journey," she said. *—AP*



RAY MICKSHAW/FOX/AP

KRISTIN BARLOWE/SPARROW RECORDS/AP

EDITORS' PICKS OF THE WEEK

BOOKS

TRUE STORIES OF BEING A BLACK MAN IN AMERICA TODAY
12
TWELVE ANGRY MEN

12 Angry Men: True Stories Of Being A Black Man In America Today

Edited by Gregory S. Parks

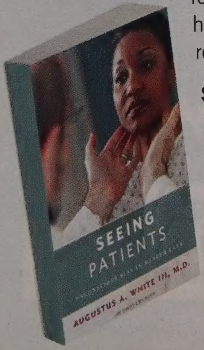
This collection of stories brings together a variety of voices, each expressing the dehumanizing experience of racial profiling in America. It includes the account of a teenager from the projects, a U.S. congressman and a professional baseball player as they share their common experience of being unfairly stopped by police. Famed law professor Lani Guinier writes an inspiring intro to this powerful book. *— Clarence Waldron*

The Hear Me Read Bible

Dr. Mary Manz Simon

The Hear-Me-Read Bible
by Dr. Mary Manz Simon

By teaching your emerging readers by repetition, *The Hear Me Read Bible* uses less than 25 words to tell a complete Bible story. With chapters like Noah's Ark, The Fall Of Jericho and Jesus FeedsThe Crowd, the 18 stories feature natural language, repetition and prediction. *The Hear Me Read Bible* also includes parent notes and vocabulary lists for every story. Not only does the child gain a boost of confidence as she or he successfully moves from page to page, but also the little one learns to read while learning about Jesus. *– Melody K. Hoffman*



Seeing Patients: Unconscious Bias In Health Care

Dr. Augustus White III

White, noted professor of orthopedic surgery at Harvard University, addresses the pervasive but hidden problem of prejudice in medicine in this revealing book. He uses extensive research to show how subconscious stereotyping of Blacks, women and other minorities influences the doctor-patient relationship and how many people, therefore, receive substandard treatment. *— CW*

CD

Avant
THE LETTER

The Letter

Avant

R&B singer Avant thrills his fans with *The Letter*, his sixth studio CD. "A letter is what you write to people to tell them what's going on in your life," he says. "This album is a letter from me to my fans of what's going on in my life, what's going through my head and my struggles as a man." Must-hear tunes include the hit single *Kiss Goodbye*, *Graduated*, *Your Body Is The Business*, *That Dude*, *Body Police* and *Walking On Water*. *— CW*

JET PLAYLIST

A weekly ranking of the hottest Black performers in R&B, hip-hop, rap, jazz and gospel, according to radio airplay, CD sales or single downloads.

TOP R&B SONGS

1. **F**K YOU!**
   CEE-LO GREEN
2. **FORGET YOU**
   CEE-LO GREEN
3. **MORE**
   USHER
4. **LOOK AT ME NOW**
   CHRIS BROWN
5. **DOWN ON ME (FEAT. 50 CENT)**
   JEREMIH & 50 CENT
6. **YEAH 3X**
   CHRIS BROWN
7. **PRETTY GIRL ROCK**
   KERI HILSON
8. **OMG (FEAT. WILL.I.AM)**
   USHER
9. **DJ GOT US FALLIN' IN LOVE (FEAT. PITBULL)**
   USHER
10. **BOTTOMS UP (FEAT. NICKI MINAJ)**
    TREY SONGZ

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TOP JAZZ CDS

1. **CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY**
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   CASSANDRA WILSON
5. **THE FONK RECORD (FEAT. TIZ & THE FONKIE PLANETARIANS)**
   WAYMAN TISDALE

TOP GOSPEL CDS

1. **WOW GOSPEL 2011**
   VARIOUS ARTISTS
2. **CHURCH ON THE MOON**
   DEITRICK HADDON
3. **DOMINIONAIRE**
   CANTON JONES
4. **WOW HITS 2011**
   VARIOUS ARTISTS
5. **FRESH**
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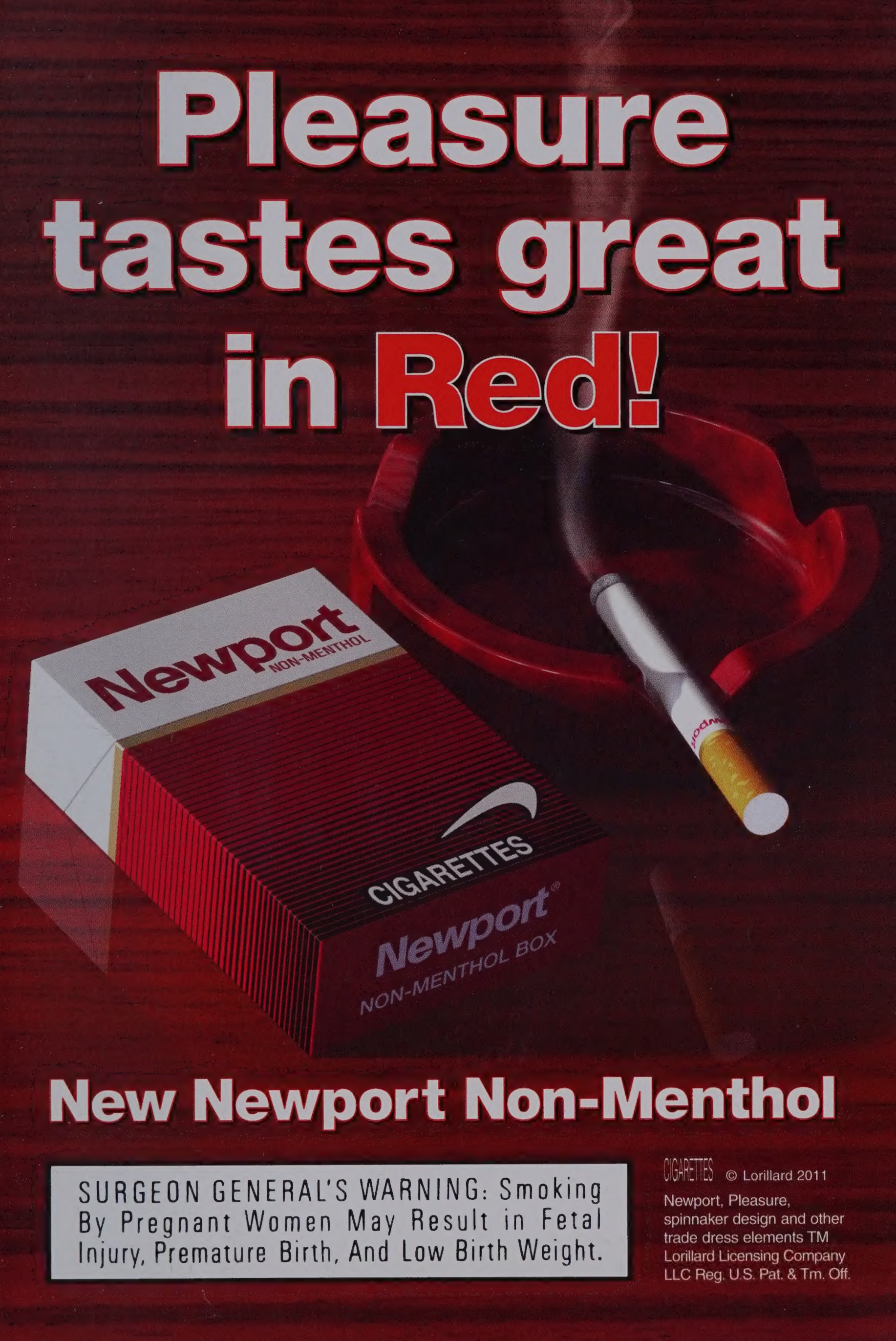
TOP HIP-HOP & RAP CDS

1. **LASERS**
   LUPE FIASCO
2. **I AM NOT A HUMAN**
   LIL WAYNE
3. **MY BEAUTIFUL DARK TWISTED FANTASY**
   KANYE WEST
4. **PINK FRIDAY (DELUXE VERSION)**
   NICKI MINAJ
5. **LASERS (DELUXE VERSION)**
   LUPE FIASCO

SOURCE: ITUNES AS OF 2/17/11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The JET Spot

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▲ Obama In Wax:

Frank Hawkins, president of the NAACP Las Vegas chapter, stands next to a wax figure of President Obama during its recent unveiling at Madame Tussauds Las Vegas.

This Week Is Burn Awareness Week:

The observance highlights the fact that an estimated 500,000 people receive professional medical treatment for burn injuries each year and some 4,000 burn fatalities are reported annually. The American Burn Association notes that the week provides an opportunity for burn, fire and life safety educators to spread the important messages of burn awareness and prevention throughout American communities.

No.1 Hip-Hop Download ON THE PLAYLIST:

Kanye West
Heartbreak

Celebrity BIRTHDAYS

Danny Moloshok/AP

Feb. 5
Bobby Brown

Paul Drinkwater/NBCU

Feb. 6
Natalie Cole

Matt Carr/Getty Images

Feb. 7
Chris Rock

JET green tip

Heat Savings Savvy:

Though high heating bills may be giving you the blues, you can save a little green and help the environment by turning down your home thermostat a degree or two. In most homes, for each degree you lower the thermostat, you save about 2 percent of your heating bill.

Source: American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy

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FEB. 9, 2009 • VOL. 115, NO. 4

New York Gov. **DAVID PATERSON** names Rep. **KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND**, a Democratic second-term lawmaker from upstate New York, to fill the U.S. Senate seat vacated by Hillary Clinton, who was appointed secretary of state **ON PAGE 9.**

Mike Groll/AP

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Cover photo by Kwaku Alston

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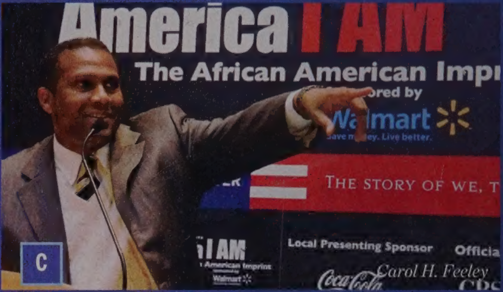
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(A) Whitney Houston presents an award during the BET Honors ceremony at the Warner Theatre in Washington, D.C. **(B) Omar Epps** and **Jennifer Morrison** attend Fox's "House" 100th Episode Party & NAMI Charity Celebration in Los Angeles. **(C) Tavis Smiley** hosts the premiere of his "America I AM: The African American Imprint" exhibition at Philadelphia's National Constitution Center. It celebrates 400 years of African-American contributions to America. **(D) Taraji P. Henson** reacts after receiving word of an Academy Award nomination for her role in the box-office hit *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*. **(E)** Actors **Chris Rock** and **Nia Long** celebrate with **Nelson George**, executive producer of the documentary film *Good Hair* at the Film Lounge Media Center during the 2009 Sundance Film Festival in Park City, UT.

E

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Mom's dream, my achievement

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Inside Washington *By Kevin Chappell* | **JET MAGAZINE**

First 100 Days? Try The First 100 Hours

President **Barack Obama** wasted no time getting to work after taking office. Within hours of his historic inauguration, Obama had issued executive orders that toughened ethics reform, outlawed torture of suspected terrorists, set in motion plans to close the Guantanamo Bay prison camp within a year and reinstated funding for family-planning services, such as abortions, in developing countries.

Obama met with his economic team to discuss his Economic Recovery and Reinvestment Plan. And in his first radio address, he focused entirely on the need to "act boldly and swiftly," before "a bad situation could become dramatically worse."

Pete Souza/White House via Getty Images

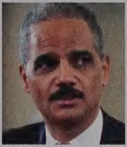
Both parties in Congress are already mulling over Obama's plan, which he hopes to sign into law in less than a month. Obama has said that he wants a broad bipartisan majority to pass the stimulus package. But Republicans have made it clear that they are skeptical about the size and scale of the proposal, and doubt that it would create 3 million to 4 million jobs over the next few years, as Obama has projected.

"Unfortunately, the trillion-dollar spending plan authored by congressional Democrats is chock-full of government programs and projects—most of which won't provide immediate relief to our ailing economy, according to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office...," House GOP Leader **John Boehner** of Ohio said in the weekly Republican address. "The plan would spend a whopping $275,000 in taxpayer dollars for every new job it aims to create, saddling each and every household with $6,700 in additional debt – paid for by our children and grandchildren."

If passed, Obama has estimated that 75 percent of the money would be spent in the first 18 months in an effort to jump-start the economy.

IN OTHER NEWS

FROM THE NATION'S CAPITAL


Valerie Goodloe

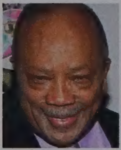
• **EXCLUSIVE:** Attorney general nominee **Eric Holder** told JET magazine that he was "surprised" at how smoothly his first round of confirmation hearings on Capitol Hill proceeded. He made the comments at an inaugural ball hosted by **Henry Louis Gates**' Web site. Holder added that he expects a good Republican grilling as the hearings resume. But he is confident that he is prepared to answer any question, particularly on his ties to embattled Illinois Gov. **Rod Blagojevich** and his recommendation, when he was acting attorney general in **Bill Clinton**'s administration, to pardon fugitive financier Marc Rich. Holder has said that the pardon was a mistake.

• **STATE OF THE UNION:** President **Obama** will deliver a State of the Union address sometime in February, according to White House Press Secretary **Robert Gibbs**. "I think it is likely that he will speak to Congress–to a joint session of Congress. I don't believe that we've got a date nailed down...," he said.

• **HEADING NORTH:** In a telephone conversation with Canadian Prime Minister **Stephen Harper**, Obama said that Canada would be his first foreign visit as president, although no date has been set. Obama also made phone calls to King **Abdullah** of Saudi Arabia, expressing the importance of continued counterterrorism cooperation, and to United Kingdom Prime Minister **Gordon Brown**, reiterating the importance of continuing and strengthening the special relationship between the two countries.

• **FRANKLIN'S GIFT TO OBAMA:** What was in the blue-bowed box **Aretha Franklin** gave to the new president after singing a rousing rendition of *My Country, 'Tis of Thee* during the swearing-in ceremony on the steps of the U.S. Capitol? JET has been told that it contained 17 sermons from her father, the late Rev. Dr. **C.L. Franklin**'s collection of homilies recorded at Detroit's New Bethel Baptist Church, where he was the pastor for 38 years and rose to national prominence as a civil rights leader. The Queen of Soul also gave the president a small Bible engraved with a personal message and a solid gold brooch with white diamonds to first lady Michelle. Franklin's 15-year-old grandson, **Jordan Franklin**, gave the first daughters, **Malia** and **Sasha**, a collection of gospel/Christian hip-hop music. Franklin is recording and releasing a commemorative version of her inauguration song.

• **SECRETARY OF ARTS?:** Maestro **Quincy Jones** is pushing President Obama to create a new Cabinet-level position called Secretary of Arts. A petition is being circulated on the Web to encourage Obama to establish the department to focus on supporting arts, culture and the humanities. So far, the Web site, petitiononline.com, has collected more than 200,000 signatures. Jones has said that he will also push the idea. The "next conversation I have with President Obama is to beg for a secretary of arts," he said.


Scott Wintrow/Elevation Photos

• **FROM HILL TO GILL:** New York Gov. **David A. Paterson** appointed Rep. **Kirsten Gillibrand** to replace newly sworn-in Secretary of State **Hillary Clinton** in the U.S. Senate. The appointment came only a day after perceived frontrunner **Caroline Kennedy** withdrew her name from consideration. Gillibrand, who served as special counsel to the U.S. secretary of Housing and Urban Development in the Clinton administration, has been praised for her support of middle-class tax cuts and affordable health care. "Over the last two months, I have had the honor of interviewing a wide range of New Yorkers for this position, and I come away from this process deeply impressed with the number and caliber of people who could fill this seat," Paterson said in a news conference announcing his appointment. "[Gillibrand] will have big shoes to fill."

Nation In A Recession; Blacks In A Depression, Study Says

Depending on whom you ask, our current economic crisis may be described as a recession or a depression.

According to a report released Jan. 15 by United for a Fair Economy (UFE), the current economic recession is being experienced as a depression by people of color. It says that Blacks live in poverty at three times the percentage of Whites.

The "State of the Dream 2009: The Silent Depression" suggests a new framework for evaluating economic well-being. The report is the first of its kind to do a thorough analysis of the historical reasons for the disparity in economic realities between Whites and people of color.

"Particular communities of color have been experiencing a recession for five years," said Amaad Rivera, one of the report's co-authors and the Racial Wealth Divide Initiative Leader for UFE, a national non-proft. "By definition, a long-term recession is a depression."

The report explains the mechanisms that helped create the silent economic depression for people of color, explores how the depression affects individuals and communities of color and proposes policy solutions to close the racial economic divide.

"Economically, Blacks and Latinos have suffered disproportionately because of structural racism and the web of policies that evolved from it," the report reads. "Eliminating the racial wealth divide is an essential step toward eliminating institutional racism."

Some of the key findings are:

- Almost 12 percent of Blacks are unemployed, a rate nearly double that of Whites. Among young Black males ages 16-19, the unemployment rate is 32.8 percent, while their White counterparts are at 18.3 percent.
- Overall, 24 percent of Blacks and 21 percent of Latinos are in poverty versus 10 percent of Whites.
- The median household incomes of Blacks and Latinos are $38,269 and $40,000, respectively, while the median household income of Whites is $61,280.
- People of color are more likely to be poor (24.5 percent), remain poor (54 percent) and move back into poverty from any income class status than their White counterparts.
- Nearly 30 percent of Blacks have zero or negative worth versus 15 percent of Whites.

—Melody K. Hoffman

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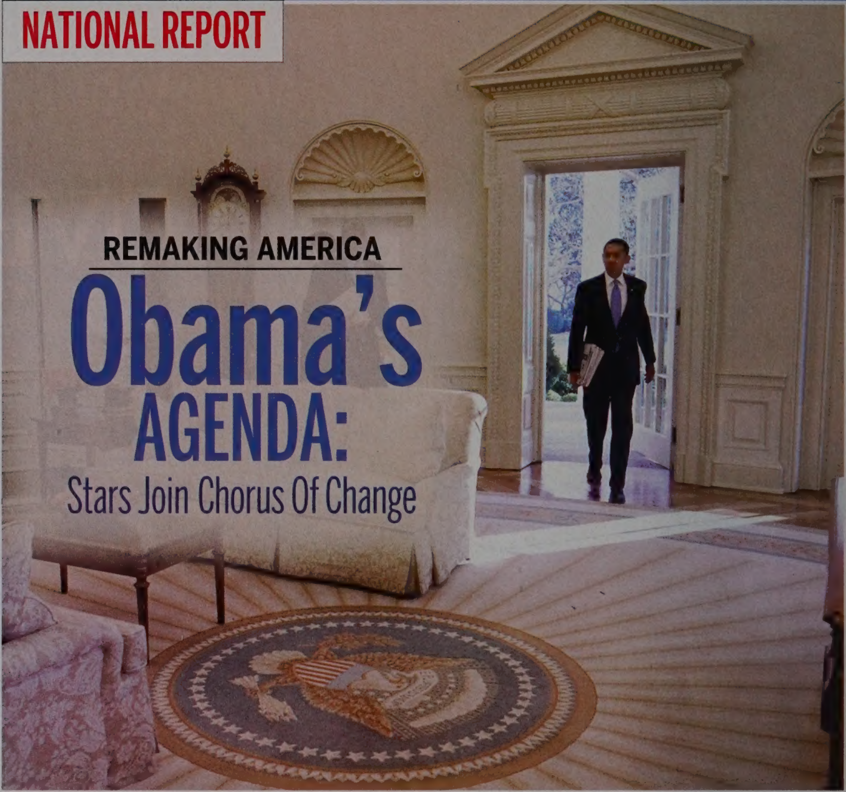

REMAKING AMERICA

Obama's AGENDA:

Stars Join Chorus Of Change

By Clarence Waldron
JET MAGAZINE

Now that President Obama is settling into the White House, the nation is watching to see how his new agenda will turn the country around.

Entertainers and civil rights leaders told JET they are confident and optimistic about the president's vision for the remaking of America.

Aretha Franklin, who sang during his inauguration and presented him with a collection of sermons by her late father, prominent minister and civil rights activist Rev. C. L. Franklin, told JET:

"President Obama has a very clear vision of where he wants to go and what he feels should be implemented to make these social corrections. I don't think that we should expect too much too soon and not give him more than a fair chance to make these changes. And it just isn't him and his administration alone. It is all of us. We must do whatever we can, big or small, to make social changes for the better. It's reminiscent of President John F. Kennedy, who said, 'ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country.' We've got to make

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these changes with President Obama."

Minister Louis Farrakhan, leader of the Nation of Islam: "President Obama has already made a tremendous difference, because our people have been lifted beyond where any leader has been able to lift our people. Now, the energy of his presidency should not be allowed to dissipate by false hopes that he can do for us that which is our responsibility to do for ourselves. We must understand the limitation of what a president can do and not put on him the burden that should be put on our shoulders, and the shoulders of the pastors, the leaders and the activists. We have to organize like never before to take the responsibility of building our community so that whatever doors he may open, we will be ready and able to take advantage of those opened doors."

Dorothy Height, 96-year-old chairwoman emerita of the National Council of Negro Women: "I feel we have a person who really has the ability to move people, as we have seen. In Michelle Obama, he has a great teammate...But he cannot do it alone. And one great thing about him is he does not want to do it alone. He wants people to work with him, and I think that's the greatest thing of all, that is part of his genius."

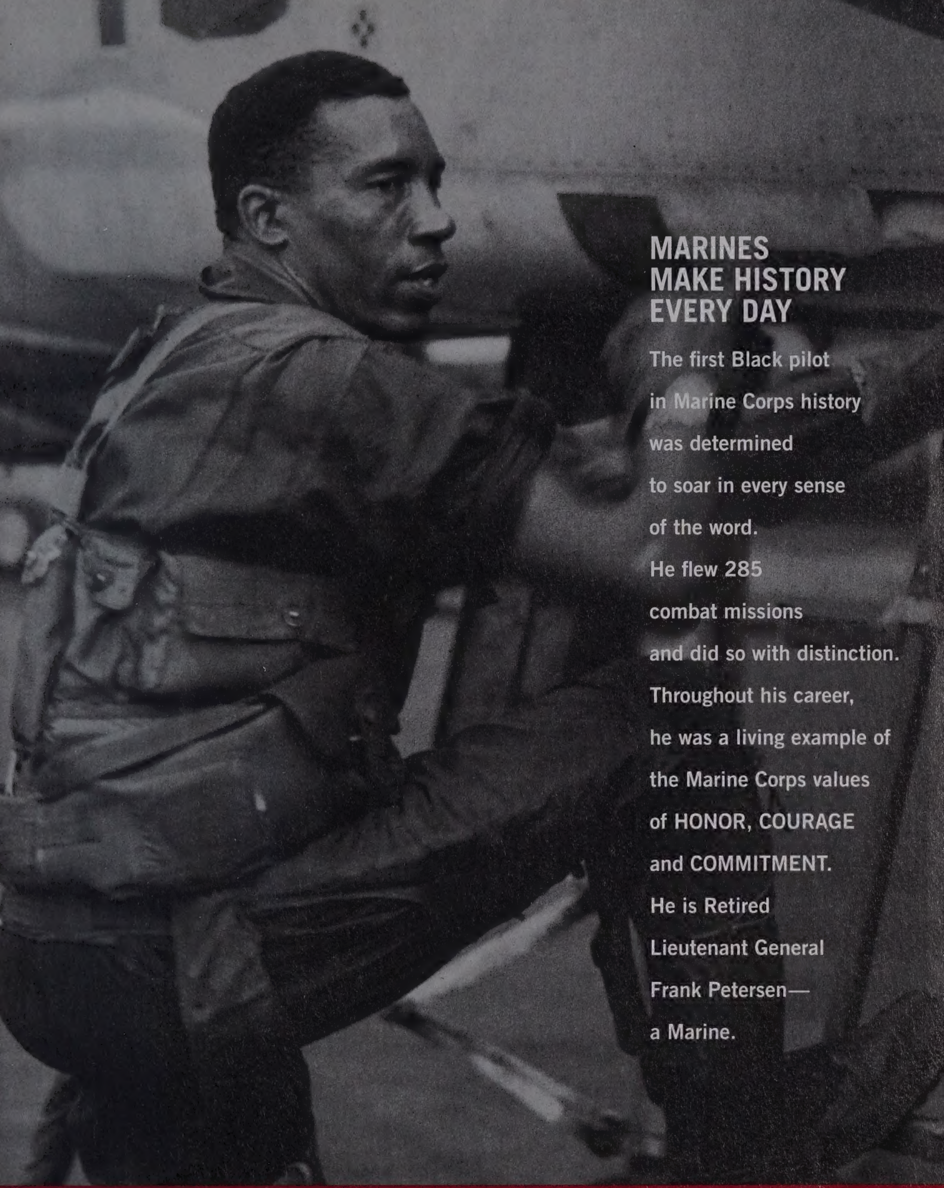
Rev. Jesse Jackson, founder of Rainbow/PUSH Coalition: "Our journey from slavery to freedom has been one of many peaks and valleys. This is the highest peak. This is a moment of joy, but our struggle does not end. The battle for equality and leveling the playing field continues. This is the most power we have ever had. We have more power now to end poverty and end unnecessary wars. It is, for us, a source of great pride. The civil rights era has made this possible...It teaches us that all things are possible. Nothing is impossible with God."

Rev. Al Sharpton, founder of the National Action Network: "My belief is that President Obama will close the devastating achievement gap between White and Black and Brown students so that all of America's children have the opportunity to learn and thrive. Currently, almost half of America's Black children never make it out of high school."

Russell Simmons, hip-hop mogul: "He is an example of Black excellence for our communities. President Obama's promotion of world peace through dialogue and outreach has already begun, and his stance on protecting the environment is also at work.There are lots of antipoverty initiatives which will include investment in education and opportunities for those struggling in poverty."

Comedian-activist **Dick Gregory:** "The one thing that we can do is to make sure he gets re-elected in four years. He needs us to be registered and ready to vote."

Soul legend **Frankie Beverly**: "No one can predict the future, but he is obviously a standup guy who's very honest and full of integrity. We've already seen how he can bring people together. This



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will continue and the world will be a better place for it. The public can help by believing in him. He is our leader and we must follow his lead."

Hit singer **John Legend:** "I do think a wise, charismatic, inspirational leader can bring about real, sustainable change. I believe Obama and his team will be able to do it."

Soul great **Eddie Levert** of the legendary O'Jays told JET: "We must pray. I emphasize that we must pray. Together, we must help him mentally and emotionally. He is going to need our help in every way possible because no one man is an island."

Singer **Akon:** "He is a great organizer. I believe he will put the tools in front of us and from there, all he can do is motivate and encourage us to work...Together as a people, there isn't anything we can't do."

Popular rap star **Nelly** told JET: "In order for President Obama to make good on his promises, Americans have to help. We have to start with ourselves–we all have to be willing to change, to improve ourselves. We have to put work into our communities, meaning help bring crime down and education up."

Access Hollywood's **Shaun Robinson:** "When I look at my two little nephews, 14 years old and 12 years old, I see them growing up in a world in which they will see no limitations on what they can achieve. It doesn't mean that they will never face racism, because they will. But, from this point on, there will never be a place that is too high for them to really believe they can reach."

Gospel singer **Donnie McClurkin:** "We can all do our part by starting to be the best we can be, individually. If you're a parent, be present; if you're a teacher, inspire our future leaders. If you're in business, let integrity be your guide; and if you're a leader, let your life be your example."

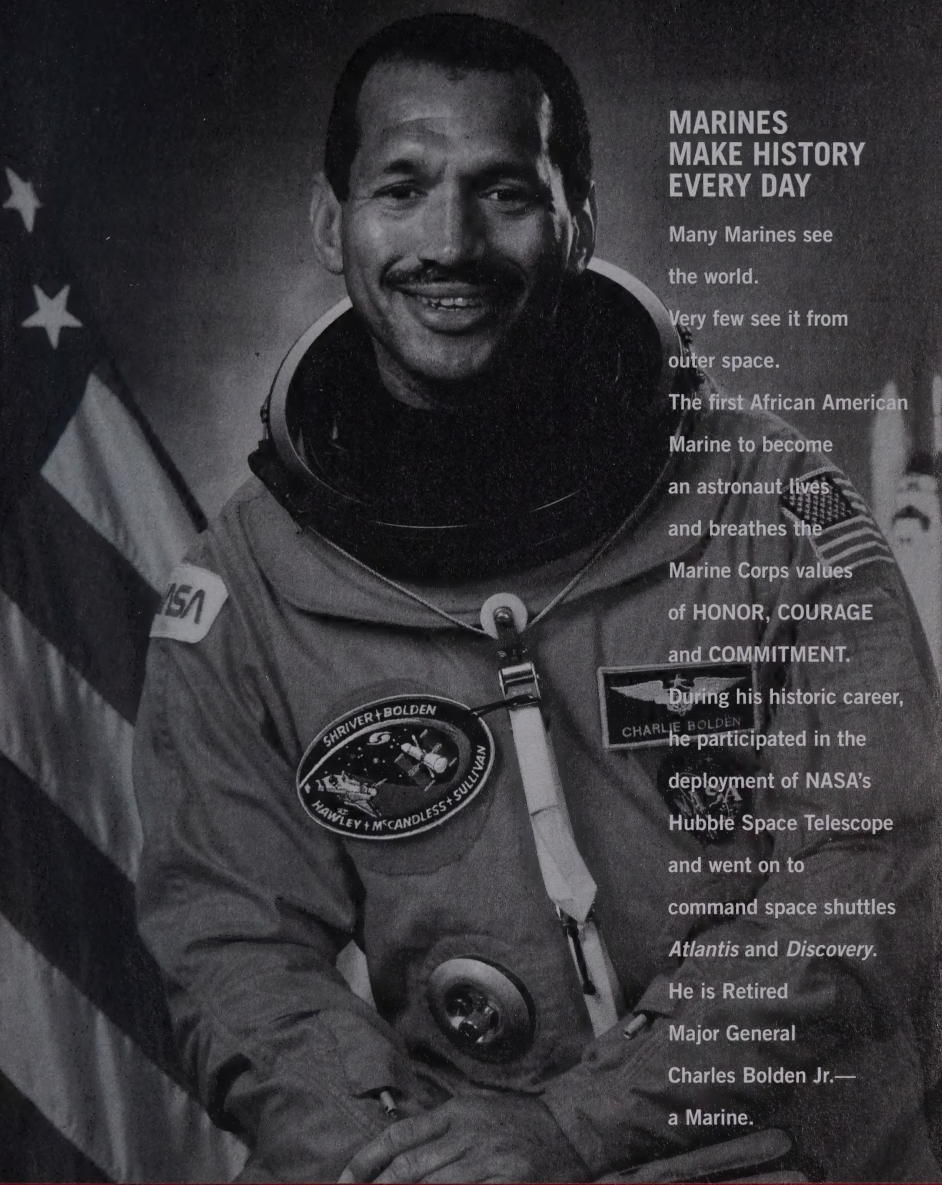
Sheryl Lee Ralph: "This is the hope and the dream of the slaves come true. To see this son of Africa and America, truly an African-American in the greatest sense of the word, rise to be the world's president, not just president of the United States, but the president of the world. The whole world is watching."

Singer **Patti Austin:** "Like millions of others, I am inspired and challenged to do things I thought were impossible before this moment in time."

Jazz musician **Nick Colionne:** "Not everyone is going to like everything he does, including me, no doubt. But I am confident that he will take measured and well-thought-out actions to address the many problems America faces."

Jazz vocalist **Nnenna Freelon:** "So many distorted images are displayed in the media about Black families. Now the world will get to explore a different experience."

Singer-songwriter **Siedah Garrett:** "The dream of change has become a reality. President Obama has already made a historical difference in the way the United States is perceived by the entire world." ❒



MARINES MAKE HISTORY EVERY DAY

Many Marines see the world. Very few see it from outer space. The first African American Marine to become an astronaut lives and breathes the Marine Corps values of HONOR, COURAGE and COMMITMENT. During his historic career, he participated in the deployment of NASA's Hubble Space Telescope and went on to command space shuttles *Atlantis* and *Discovery*. He is Retired Major General Charles Bolden Jr.—a Marine.

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CANCER SURVIVOR'S STORY OF PAIN, FAITH

Author Kim Stanley began writing her book as a form of therapy when she lost her memory after a traumatic car accident. While chronicling her setbacks and struggles, she realized all of the pain that she was holding on to.

"I thank the Lord every night and every morning because I should have been dead a long time ago," the 37-year-old Ohio native says. "Instead, I'm living proof that when life is at its worst...God is at his best."

Stanley's book, *Thank You, Lord Jesus*, chronicles her many battles, which began at age 15 when doctors discovered she had Stage IV Hodgkin's disease. With less than a projected eight months to live, Stanley began to fight for her life.

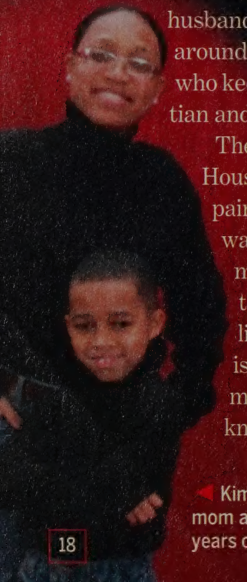
She went into remission and then experienced a collapsed lung, which was removed. Later doctors found a tumor, which was also removed, wrapped around her windpipe. In 2000, she was diagnosed with thyroid cancer, and most recently, she had surgery to remove malignant lymph nodes in her neck. She is now cancer-free.

Aside from her health issues, six weeks after giving birth to a miracle baby (doctors told her she would never be able to have children with her chemo treatment) in 1998, she and her son Christopher were thrown from their SUV in a car accident. She suffered brain damage and a fractured spine. He experienced head trauma and died shortly thereafter.

"After I lost Christopher, I didn't want to live," says Stanley, adding that during this suffering, she and her husband drifted apart and eventually divorced. "And then God turned around 18 months later and blessed me with my little angel I have now, who keeps me on my toes, my (9-year-old) son Christian. I look at Christian and he is my sight example of God's love."

The detailed account of her life in *Thank You, Lord Jesus* (Creation House, $12.99) is a testimony of struggles, strengths and strides. Her pain would have crippled or destroyed most people. However, Stanley wants others to know that her story also offers hope and encouragement and it reveals victory. "The whole purpose of the book is I want to share God's blessing with the world. Some people may be feeling like I felt, that I had been forgotten and God has chosen me to punish me, but he didn't. He chose me because he loved me. He wanted me to speak to the world, and that's why I'm here, to let the world know that God is real and he's a great God with grace and mercy."❐

—*Melody K. Hoffman*



◄ Kim Stanley says she has made it through because of her two "angels on Earth," her mom and her 9-year-old son, Christian. Stanley has battled cancer since she was 15 years old. She overcame Hodgkin's disease and thyroid cancer.

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Richard Parsons Named Chairman At Citigroup Inc.

Richard Parsons

Richard Parsons, former president, CEO and chairman of Time Warner, has been named by Citigroup Inc. as its new chairman.

Parsons, already lead director and chair of the Citigroup Board's nomination and governance committee, will succeed Win Bischoff, who is retiring from Citi later this month.

"One of my top priorities will be to ensure the board remains committed to strong, independent corporate governance–especially in today's challenging economic conditions," said the 60-year-old Parsons in a statement. "I also will work to reconstitute the board as directors retire with new members who bring strong, proven business judgment and financial- and banking-sector expertise."

Amid the credit crisis, Citi, once the world's biggest financial company, is fighting to save itself after five straight quarters of losses and having received a $45 billion government bailout in November.

In Parsons' previous position at Time Warner, he led the company's turnaround after helping to negotiate its merger with America Online in 2000.

—Margena A. Christian

Died: **David "Fathead" Newman,** 75, a jazz tenor sax soloist who played with the Ray Charles Band for 12 years, of pancreatic cancer in a Kingston, NY, hospital... **Freddie Hubbard,** 70, the Grammy-winning jazz trumpeter whose style influenced a generation of musicians and who collaborated with Ornette Coleman, John Coltrane and Sonny Rollins, after suffering a heart attack at Sherman Oaks Hospital in Los Angeles... **Geraldine McCullough**, 91, a renowned sculptor and artist who once served as the chairperson of the art department for 12 years at Rosary College (now Dominican University), at her home and studio in Oak Park, IL... **Bernie Hamilton**, 80, the actor best known for his role as the no-nonsense police captain, Harold Dobey, on the 1970s TV series "Starsky and Hutch" who later entered the music industry producing R&B and gospel records, of cardiac arrest at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles... **Coy Bacon**, 66, a defensive lineman and fierce pass rusher during a 14-year NFL career with Los Angeles, San Diego, Cincinnati and Washington, in his hometown, Ironton, OH... **George Francis**, 112, the nation's oldest man who lived through both World Wars, man's first walk on the moon, and the election of the first Black president, of congestive heart failure at a nursing home in Sacramento, CA... **Dr. Cecelia Diane Howell**, 58, a business advocate who was the publisher of Black Business Listings newspaper, producer of Black Expo, Ltd., and executive director of the nonprofit organization SEEDS (Self-Empowerment through Education, Entrepreneurship and Dreams), from complications from pneumonia at Kaiser Hospital in Oakland, CA.

Happiness Is:

Rik J. Reynolds wed **Brooke Ashley Gillis** at the Enon Tabernacle Baptist Church in Philadelphia. The bride is a graduate of Pennsylvania State University and La Salle University. She is an interactive strategist at MayoSeitz Media in Blue Bell, PA. The groom is a petty officer in the United States Naval Reserves and a letter carrier for the United States Postal Service. They honeymooned in Costa Rica and will live in Philadelphia.

▶ Lots Of Love:

Leo Hendricks Jr. tied the knot with the former **Ebonique Carney** during a ceremony in Birmingham, AL. The bride is a graduate of Florida A&M University. She is an independent contractor as an occupational therapist in the Memphis City Schools. The groom is a graduate of the Community College of the Air Force and a federal firefighter at Millington Naval Base. The couple honeymooned in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico.

◀ If You Believe:

Rickey Wendell Robinson married **Veronica Denise Bell** at the Lee Chapel in Fort Lee, VA. The bride attended Virginia Commonwealth University. She is a senior residential appraiser with Bank of America. The groom is a graduate of Central Texas College and Miami Dade College. He is a telecommunications specialist at Langley Air Force Base in Virginia. The exciting honeymoon spot was Puerto Vallarta, Mexico.

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Love & Happiness

►Hope Springs Eternal:

Phillip Antonio Pollard wed **Geomyra Nichel Lewis** at the Foxchase Manor in Manassas, VA. The bride is a graduate of George Mason University. She is executive assistant for The Carlyle Group in Washington, D.C., and the owner of Exceeding Expectations Wedding & Event Management Company. The groom is a graduate of Delaware State University. He is field manager for Linens of the Week. Aruba is where they honeymooned.

►Sweet Surrender:

Mr. and Mrs. **Jairus Chavis Wilson** commemorated 50 years of marriage by renewing their vows at Mount Vernon Baptist Church in Durham, NC. Mrs. **Velma Jean Sims Wilson** retired from North Carolina Central University after 30 years of service as an administrative assistant in the division of financial affairs. Her devoted mate is a U.S. Air Force veteran and retired fire marshal of the city of Durham, NC. They have two children and two grandchildren.

◄At Your Best:

Tarus DaRell Morgan joined in holy matrimony with **Veronica Michelle Moss** at Holy Rosary Catholic Church in Houston. A graduate of Southern University and A&M College, Baton Rouge, the bride is a project manager with the Johnson Group Advertising Agency. A graduate of Southern University and A&M College, Baton Rouge, the groom is in the second-generation program at Morgan Management of Chattanooga, TN. They honeymooned in the British Virgin Islands and will live in Chattanooga, TN.

Women & Heart Disease

Know The Subtle Symptoms Of A Heart Attack

By Marti Parham
JET MAGAZINE

"Listen to your body"—that is the message that St. Louis resident Patricia Henderson wants to get out to women across the country in recognition of American Heart Month.

In February of 2004, Henderson, 44 at the time, experienced what she described as a "burning sensation" in her chest, accompanied by a shortness of breath. Two days later, the same symptoms occurred with more frequency.

"I knew something was different," says Henderson, who had no history of heart disease. "Different enough to where I got on the phone and called my doctor."

Henderson, a human resources professional, was instructed by her doctor to go to a hospital emergency room. After six hours of testing, it was revealed that Henderson's left coronary artery was 85 percent blocked. Two days later, she had heart bypass surgery.

While in recovery, Henderson recalled feeling as though she was going to faint. When she woke up, two more days had passed and she was told that she had suffered a heart attack.

"If I would not have gone to the hospital, I would have had a massive heart attack. The doctors said I would have died," says Henderson. "My symptoms were so minor, but for me, they were different enough to pay attention to."

While pain and discomfort along with shortness of breath are common signs of heart attack for both men and women, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) reports

"Basically, I saved my own life," says Patricia Henderson, who survived a heart attack five years ago because of her own quick response to abnormal symptoms. "I know the importance of listening to my body."

Courtesy of Go Red For Women

that many women tend to have a wider range of symptoms. The less common symptoms usually experienced by women include indigestion, palpitations, nausea or vomiting.

Baton Rouge, LA, family practitioner Dr. Rani G. Whitfield notes that there is no concrete reason for the difference in symptoms between men and women. He suggests that one theory has to do with menopause and a woman's falling hormone levels. Whitfield adds that too often, Black women put their families first, don't take good care of themselves and ignore changes in their bodies. When something feels abnormal, he suggests reporting those symptoms to a doctor immediately.

"It is of the utmost importance that women not dismiss symptoms like chest pain, shortness of breath or irregular heartbeat as 'stress'-related as they could very well be signs of heart disease. If a patient is uncomfortable with the diagnosis... seek a second opinion," Whitfield urges. "Recognizing the warning signs and responding rapidly by calling 911 could mean the difference between life and death."

Signs Of A Heart Attack Every Woman Should Know

- Discomfort in one or both arms, back, neck, jaw or stomach
- Shortness of breath (often occurring with chest discomfort)
- Nausea
- Feeling faint
- Breaking out in a cold sweat
- Heartburn
- Loss of appetite
- Feeling tired or weak
- Coughing
- Dizziness
- Heart flutters

Source: National Institutes of Health

FIVE STEPS TO REDUCE THE RISK OF HEART DISEASE

- Eat a healthy diet
- Maintain a normal weight
- Avoid smoking
- Engage in physical activity
- Know your numbers (blood pressure, cholesterol, triglycerides)

Source: National Institutes of Health

According to the NIH, Black women tend to have more risk factors for heart disease than their White counterparts. Those risk factors include obesity, high blood pressure, lack of physical activity and diabetes.

To reduce the risk of heart disease, experts suggest that women avoid smoking, engage in physical activity, eat a healthy diet, maintain a normal weight and be aware of their numbers for blood pressure, cholesterol and triglycerides.

To learn more about how women are affected by heart disease, visit the American Heart Association Web site at www.goredforwomen.org.❐

Study Suggests Getting More Sleep Can Help Prevent A Cold

Whether or not you catch a cold during this winter season may depend on how much sleep you're getting each night.

According to a study published in a recent issue of the Archives of Internal Medicine, of the 153 participants sprayed with a cold virus, those who got less than seven hours of sleep a night increased their chances of catching a cold by 3 percent. Those sprayed with the virus and who slept poorly were five times more likely to become ill than those who slept soundly.

"The longer you sleep, the better off you are, the less susceptible you are to colds," said the study's lead author, Sheldon Cohen, a psychology professor at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh.

Prior research has suggested that sleep boosts the immune system at the cell level. Researchers for this study say that the findings are the first to show that small sleep disturbances increase the risk of getting sick.

—Marti Parham and AP reports

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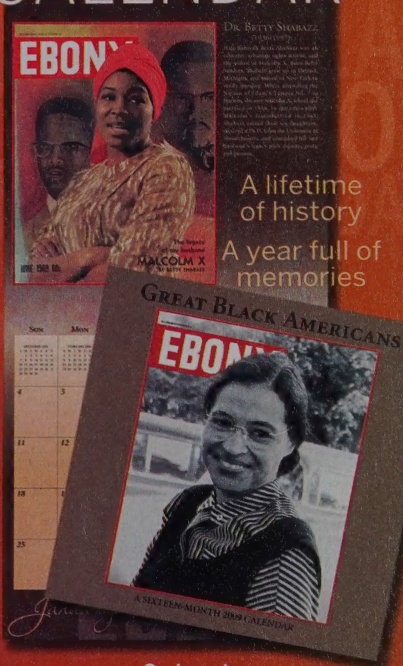
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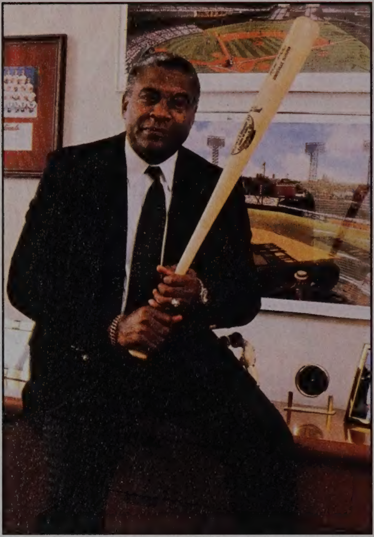

February 3, 1989–

Former St. Louis Cardinals first baseman **Bill White** became the first Black to head an American professional sports league when he was named National League president on this day. His position also made him the highest-ranking Black executive of a major U.S. professional sports league. White, who won the unanimous approval of the 12 league owners, broadcast games for the New York Yankees for the previous 17 years and played in the National League for 13 seasons, beginning with the New York (now San Francisco) Giants in 1956. He spent most of his playing career as a first baseman for the St. Louis Cardinals, retiring in 1969. White, who had a career batting average of .286 with 202 home runs, played in six All-Star games and won seven Gold Glove awards. Born William DeKova White in Lakewood, FL, he retired from the league presidency in 1994.

February 8, 1986–

Oprah Winfrey, talk show host, actress, businesswoman and billionaire, made television history by becoming the first Black woman to host a nationally syndicated television talk show on this day. Oprah is the first Black woman in television and film to own her own production company (Harpo Productions, Inc.). She also is recognized as the richest woman in television, and is on Forbes list of world billionaires with a net worth of $2.5 billion.

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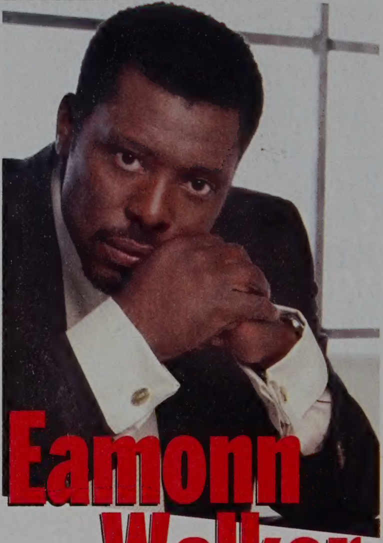

Michael Levine/FOX

◀ **Eamonn Walker, a former dancer who also once studied social work at the University of North London, believes that "acting is cathartic."**

Eamonn Walker

International Actor Finds Success On Film, TV And Stage

Eamonn Walker recalled that he was 9 years old when Oscar winner Sidney Poitier changed his life forever.

"I saw *In The Heat Of The Night* when he slapped that character. That's a reflection of what was going on in Britain. There was an awful lot of racism around me," said the London-born Walker. "Seeing that film was my inspiration to turn around and realize the power of the medium of film or a really good book. When someone inspires you, you stand tall. Sidney Poitier inspired me to stand up."

Walker, who recently delivered a fiery performance as blues legend Howlin' Wolf in the film *Cadillac Records*, has since made a name for himself, having achieved acting success in film, theater and television in London and the United States.

Best known for his role as the Muslim leader Kareem Said on HBO's "Oz," Walker is returning to television for the NBC show "Kings," airing March 19.

He calls it a modern-day version of parts of the Old Testament, where he'll play Rev. Samuel, known in the Bible as the prophet Samuel.

Walker, who appeared on Broadway alongside Denzel Washington in *Julius Caesar*, made history last year at London's Globe Theatre by becoming the first Black to portray Othello.

The married father of three has a busy year, starring in the spring film *The Messenger* with Woody Harrelson, another film called *Blood and Bone* and in the BBC miniseries "Moses Jones."

"In [Sidney Poitier's book *The Measure of a Man*], he said 'you are being watched and you're being watched by your people,'" Walker explained about his selection of roles. "I know I'm a role model, especially for Black Britons."

How does he manage to lose his heavy British accent for roles like playing the gritty-voiced singer Howlin' Wolf?

"Whenever I become the character, I fully become the character. You start from within and it works itself on the outside."

—Margena A. Christian

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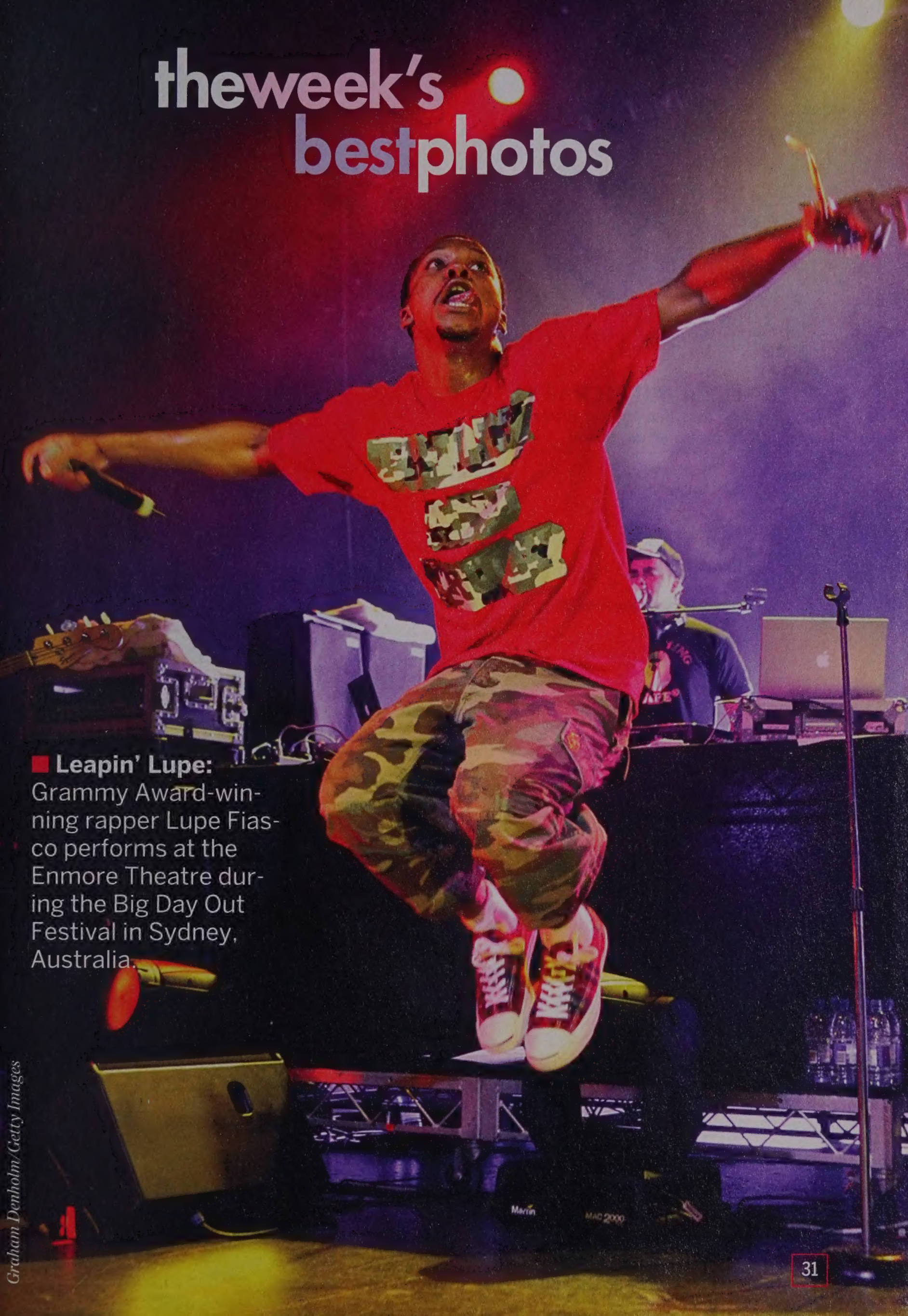

Leapin' Lupe: Grammy Award-winning rapper Lupe Fiasco performs at the Enmore Theatre during the Big Day Out Festival in Sydney, Australia.

Graham Denholm/Getty Images

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A PARTIAL listing of the cities, show locations, dates and times for the Spring 2009 tour season

Sarasota, FL	**Tues. 2/3**
Sarasota Municipal Auditorium	7:00pm
Ft. Lauderdale, FL	**Wed. 2/4**
War Memorial Auditorium	8:00pm
Lakeland, FL	**Thurs. 2/5**
Branscomb Auditorium	8:00pm
Daytona Beach, FL	**Fri. 2/6**
Mary McLeod Bethune Performing Arts Center	7:00pm
Columbia, SC	**Sat. 2/7**
The Township Auditorium	8:00pm
Savannah, GA	**Sun. 2/8**
Savannah Civic Center	8:00pm
Fayetteville, NC	**Wed. 2/11**
Cumberland County Crown Theatre	8:00pm
Orangeburg, SC	**Thurs. 2/12**
Martin Luther King Jr., Auditorium	8:00pm
Simpsonville, SC	**Sat. 2/14**
Bethlehem Baptist Church Christian Life Center	8:00pm
Atlanta, GA	**Wed. 2/18**
Cobb Energy Performing Arts Center	8:00pm
Valdosta, GA	**Fri. 2/20**
J.E. Mathis Municipal Auditorium	8:00pm
Macon, GA	**Sat. 2/21**
Macon City Auditorium	8:00pm
Chattanooga, TN	**Mon. 2/23**
Memorial Auditorium	7:00pm
Rome, GA	**Tues. 2/24**
Rome City Auditorium	8:00pm
Biloxi, MS	**Thurs. 2/26**
Beau Rivabe Hotel & Casino	8pm
Jackson, MS	**Fri. 2/27**
Jackson Convention Complex	8:00pm

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beauty of the week

VICTORIA JACKSON, from Virginia, is a college student majoring in communications. She enjoys spending time with family and friends.

Photo by
Lee McDowell

Want to become a JET Beauty of the Week? For more details log on to EbonyJET.com

Evan Agostini/AP

■ **Jamison Honored:** Famed dancer/choreographer Judith Jamison is humbly presented the Education Award from actress Angela Bassett at the recent BET Honors ceremony in Washington, D.C. Other honorees were Magic Johnson, B. Smith, Congressman James Clyburn, Mary J. Blige and Tyler Perry.

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Thrilling Affair: Michael Jackson's siblings, Tito and La Toya Jackson, attend an afterparty in London following the press night for *Thriller Live*. The touring musical show at the Lyric Theatre in West End, London, celebrates the King of Pop's spectacular career.

Dave M. Benett/Getty Images

Morris 'Fired Up' To Be Tampa Bay Bucs' New Head Coach

The Tampa Bay Buccaneers' new head coach Raheem Morris says it all happened so fast.

Although he has no prior head-coaching experience, Bucs personnel were confident in making him the youngest NFL head coach. "He's a leader, commands the respect of the team...and his peers," team co-chairman Joel Glazer said. "Raheem can relate to today's NFL player. The game has changed a lot. It's always changing. If you don't adapt to those changes, you can't compete."

Morris, 32, just the seventh Black NFL head coach, replaces Super Bowl winner Jon Gruden. Morris, a former Hofstra player and assistant coach, has been with the Bucs for six seasons over two stints.

Chris O'Meara/AP

▲ "It's really hard to even imagine right now. It's all happened so fast," said Raheem Morris.

He takes over a team that won three division titles under his predecessor, but hasn't won a playoff game since capturing the franchise's only NFL championship in January 2003. Despite a 9-3 start this season, the Bucs ended with four consecutive losses and denied a postseason spot. *—Melody K. Hoffman with AP reports*

Mourning Retires After 15 NBA Seasons

Miami Heat center Alonzo Mourning is retiring from the NBA after 15 seasons.

The seven-time All-Star said he won't return from a devastating leg injury he sustained on Dec. 19, 2007. He had been working out at the Miami Heat complex and said he's running and jumping again, but he feared another leg injury if he returned.

"When you've got something you love and you're passionate about, it's hard to let that go," said Mourning, who turns 39 Feb. 8. "But at 38 I feel I've physically done all I can for this game. It has been an amazing ride."

Mourning, who was drafted by the Charlotte Hornets and played for New Jersey, spent the majority of his career with the Heat, helping them reach the playoffs six consecutive years. He was the backup center to Shaquille O'Neal when Miami won the NBA title in 2006.

Mourning was diagnosed in October 2000 with focal segmental glomerulosclerosis, a career-threatening kidney disease. He missed the entire 2002-03 season and underwent a transplant in 2003, which he returned from. "I think I've got nine lives," he said. "I'm part feline."

—Melody K. Hoffman with AP reports

Race Films DVD Set

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Race films were movies made for and by African-Americans during the first half of the 20th century. Because these movies were made for African-Americans, they were called Race Films.

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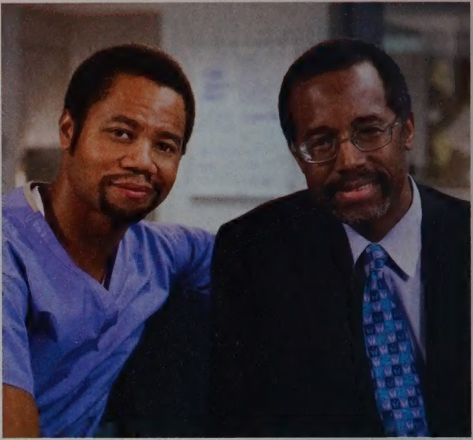
Life Story Of Renowned Neurosurgeon Dr. Benjamin Carson Turned Into Television Movie

By Margena A. Christian
JET MAGAZINE



▲ Academy Award-winning actor Cuba Gooding Jr. spends a moment with Dr. Benjamin Carson, whom he plays in the upcoming TNT original movie *Gifted Hands: The Ben Carson Story*.

Before he started using a scalpel to save lives as a world renowned neurosurgeon, Dr. Benjamin Carson, at 14, once nearly used a knife to stab a friend for changing the radio station.

"I spent three hours in the bathroom praying and reading from Proverbs," he said. "As I started reading that book, it described a fool. I thought that was me. I was being a symbol of weakness by letting other people make me angry. I resolved that day it would never happen again and it never has."

Today, Carson is the director of pediatric neurosurgery at Johns Hopkins Children's Center. He now uses his hands to save lives and shared his story in the 1990 book, *Gifted Hands: The Ben Carson Story*.

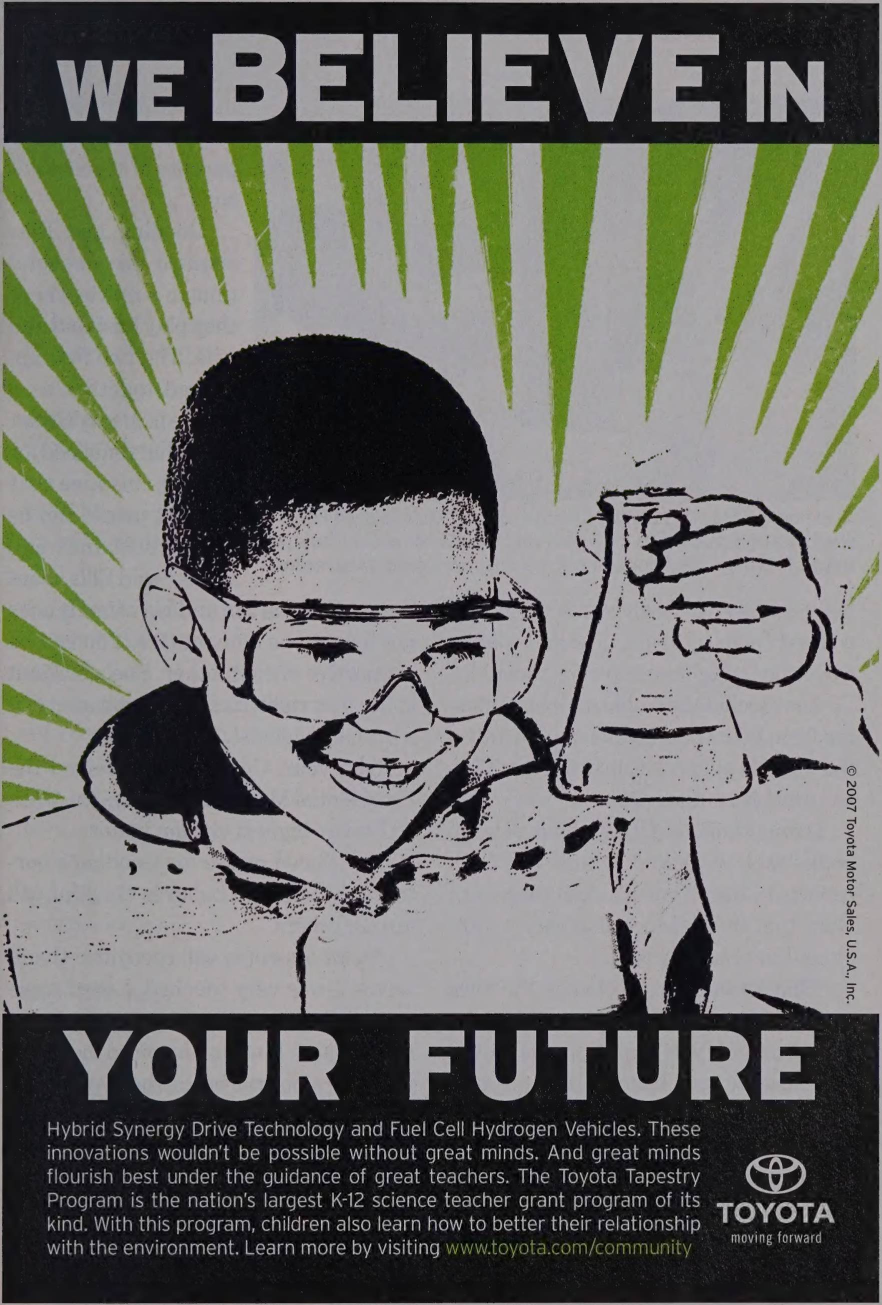
TNT is bringing his life story, based on the best-selling book, to television on Feb. 7 in an original movie by the same name.

Oscar winner Cuba Gooding Jr. portrays Carson, who made medical history in 1987 by becoming the first person to successfully operate to separate a pair of conjoined twins joined at the back of the head and have them survive.

"It's been a long time coming," Carson told JET magazine. "Twelve or 15 years I was talking to different producers and could never really come to a level of comfort with any of them. They all believed in artistic license and I don't believe in all that. The books have done really well, but the movie will reach even more people. I think that's why the good Lord put me here to inspire and help a lot of young people to recognize the potential that lies within them."

Kimberly Elise portrays his mother, Sonya, who believed that if her son was going to be successful, he had to read.

"I thought she was amazing overall," said Elise. "All the things she didn't have she wanted her children to have. She



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TNT/David Lee

▲ Kimberly Elise plays Carson's mother, Sonya, while Jaishon Fisher plays a young Carson. "She did a good job," said Carson about Elise's portrayal of his mom. "By hook or crook, her boys were going to be readers."

believed they had it all within them. She wanted them to thrive, live and soar in ways she thought possible for them."

That's what the single mother, suffering from bouts of depression with only a third-grade education, insisted that Carson and his brother do.

Demanding that they read several books each week and submit two book reports to her, it wasn't until they were older that they learned that their mother couldn't read herself.

"She strategized to change the lives of her children," said Aunjanue Ellis, who plays Carson's wife, Candy, in the movie. "Because he was born in dire circumstances didn't mean he had to lead a dire life. He had the wonderful experience of having a mother who saw that. She got her kids to start reading."

Carson and wife Candy have been married for more than 30 years. They are the parents of three adult sons.

Gooding and Ellis reunite for a second time in a movie where they play husband and wife. The two first appeared together as a couple in *Men of Honor*.

"What remained for me was this idea that brilliant people can be lovers, husbands and wives," said Ellis about the real-life Carson and his wife. "It does not have to be competitive. You can be supportive of each other. She's brilliant in her own right, incredibly educated and a brilliant violinist."

Last year, Carson, 57, received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the United States' highest civilian honor.

He offered praise for Gooding's portrayal of him and believes the film will inspire others.

"A lot of people will recognize themselves. I was very touched. I shed some tears," Carson said. "There is no question about it. It was an inspired movie...If you have a normal brain, then you are an extraordinary person and you can do virtually anything that you want to do. It's a matter of how much time and effort you want to put into it. You can control where you go, not somebody else." ❐

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Taraji P. Henson, Viola Davis Receive Oscar Nominations

The role of a caring mother has proven to be life changing for the careers of actresses Taraji P. Henson and Viola Davis. This year both women have been nominated for their first Academy Award, each in the category of Best Actress in a Supporting Role.

In the movie *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button,* Henson plays Queenie, the surrogate mother to Benjamin Button (played by Brad Pitt), a man who is aging backward. In the film *Doubt,* Davis portrays Mrs. Miller, a woman who learns that her son may be the victim of abuse by a priest at his school.

Trouble The Water, a film for which Danny Glover serves as executive producer, also received a nomination for Best Documentary Feature. The movie shows the devastation of Hurricane Katrina documented with a hand-held recorder by New Orleans resident Kimberly Rivers Roberts and her husband, Scott Roberts.

In the category of Best Short Film (Live Action), the movie *New Boy* received a nomination. The short, featuring Olutunji Ebun-Cole as Joseph, is about a 9-year-old Black boy who begins his first day of school in Ireland.

The Academy Awards, the biggest movie event of the year, will air Feb. 22 at 8:00 p.m. ET on the ABC network.

-Marti Parham

Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences

▲ Taraji P. Henson received an Academy Award nomination for her portrayal of Queenie in the film *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button.*

Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences

▲ Viola Davis was recognized by the Academy for her role as Mrs. Miller in *Doubt.*

Zeitgeist Films

▲ Kimberly Rivers Roberts and Scott Roberts star in their movie *Trouble The Water,* which is nominated for Best Documentary Feature.

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SARAH DASH
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LABELLE

STILL 'FIERCE' AND GOING STRONG

By Clarence Waldron
JET MAGAZINE

Sister-friends Sarah Dash, Nona Hendryx and Patti LaBelle have reunited for their first tour in more than 30 years, *Back to Now*.

Labelle has not changed at all.

The '70s group is still bold, funky and sassy, and Lord knows they can still hit those notes—those strong, soaring, over-the-rainbow notes.

And yes, they still wear exotic, outrageous, feather-laced costumes, which became their signature style decades ago.

Labelle–Patti LaBelle, Sarah Dash and Nona Hendryx–is celebrating its first tour and first album in 32 years, both aptly called *Back To Now*.

They appear to be having the time of their lives each night as they revisit the music that made them stars.

On a recent tour stop at the Chicago Theatre, LaBelle joked that she knew somebody might say they look like "Halloween queens" with their outrageous costumes.

She discussed the chemistry and energy of the group with JET, saying, "I really enjoy Sarah and Nona. I love them. They're my sisters and now we are back doing what we did."

Dash says, "It is God's blessing that this is happening. It is bigger than the three of us. It is a great experience that I wish everyone could have, to be able to return to do what you really love to do."

And Hendryx points out, "It's like a family reunion. There's something about the combination of the three of us. Growing up together, a part of each other's lives, there's a part of us that no one else really knows. There are things that are unspoken and in some ways nourishing and help us to see into each other. It is interesting being together again in that way."

Their tour is setting standards for women in their 60s. Each night, they proudly tell their ages: LaBelle, 64, Hendryx, 64 and Dash, 63.

"I want Labelle to set a precedent," says Dash. "The 60s are the new 40s now. I want our fans to look at us and say, 'I can do that too.' It may not be music, it may be a dream that they have. If you want to go back to school, do it. If there's something you want to do, don't be afraid to do it. The key for us is the music. The music keeps us young. When you are able to do what you love to do, it keeps you young and interesting. Being creative keeps us young.

"I may not have come back as a size 4, but I am here and I can still wear these pumps," she laughs.

LaBelle says the group has toned down their costumes a bit. "I can't go back that far and put on some of that," she laughs. "But we are still fierce."

Hendryx, who's still able to wear sexy, skintight leather pants just like she did 30 years ago, says, "You've got to stay in shape. We wouldn't be able to do what we are doing if we were not healthy."

She works out three days a week and never overeats. "Just because you are 65 does not mean you have to retire to the front porch in a rocking chair. You can still attain your dreams at that age. Stay healthy, keep a positive and abundant mind, and just do it."

The singers first won fame as The Bluebelles, a group that included a fourth member, Cindy Birdsong. They later became Patti LaBelle and the Bluebelles and hit the charts with the 1961 smash *I Sold My Heart To The Junkman*. Birdsong later left the group to join The Supremes and the singers continued as a trio and eventually changed their names to Labelle. They recorded their signature tune *Lady Marmalade* in 1974 —a hit covered in 2001 by Christina Aguilera, Mya, Lil' Kim and Pink.

Labelle's last album together was 1976's *Chameleon*, featuring their final single, *Isn't It A Shame*.

They each launched solo careers. Dash recorded the 1983 dance hit *Sinner Man* and toured with The Rolling Stones' Keith Richards and worked with The O'Jays, Alice Cooper and Bo Diddley. She is working on opening an arts and music academy for youth in her hometown of Trenton, NJ, and also is putting the finishing touches on a men's and women's fragrance and clothing and jewelry lines.

Hendryx has recorded all kinds of music, from heavy metal to funk to New Age, and has worked with Prince, Peter Gabriel and Talking Heads. She has her own record label, Rhythm Bank Entertainment, and wrote music for the upcoming film *Mama, I Want To Sing*.

Two-time Grammy winner LaBelle (who capitalizes the B, unlike in the group's name) has become a beloved solo artist and has written several books, including the new cookbook *Recipes For The Good Life*. She shows her fans how to cook with the DVD *In The Kitchen With Miss Patti*. She also has a custom line of hot sauces, relishes and seasonings and will bring her trademark pumps to a leading retailer later this year.

Fans never knew why they broke up. There wasn't a farewell album or tour.

LaBelle explains the split. "We didn't break up because of Patti LaBelle leaving the group. We all felt that we had given Labelle as much as we could at that time. We all went separate ways. I stayed at home for two years after we left, afraid to go out on stage by myself. So

▶ Sarah Dash, Patti LaBelle, and Nona Hendryx acknowledge a standing ovation as they open their show at the Chicago Theatre, where they performed their hit tunes and latest single *Roll Out*, produced by Wyclef Jean, from the *Back to Now* CD. The CD also features a tribute to civil rights heroine Rosa Parks, *Dear Rosa*. Below, Labelle performs in 1970s concert.

Debra Meeks

I definitely didn't quit to go solo. We all quit at the same time."

Dash adds, "We began to change within the same unit. Our musical tastes became different. Patti described it as being a divorce. You just know that this is not working anymore, and you haven't stopped loving them, but there is something wrong."

Hendryx points out, "We had been together 17 years. We really couldn't find more reasons to stay together. But we have always been in touch with each other and we've been supportive."

The trio reunited for several TV appearances and recorded the 1995 dance hit *Turn It Out.*

The current tour has been in the works for two years and this was the only time that everyone's schedule was open. "We knew if we didn't do it now, we probably wouldn't do it," says Dash.

Reflecting on Labelle's hot tour and CD, legendary music producer Kenny Gamble, who worked on the *Back to Now* recording, sums up the group's lasting appeal. "Labelle is show business. They walk out on stage and take care of business," he says.

"They give you something that you have never seen before with the feathers and exotic costumes. And after all these years, they still look great and sound better than ever."❐

Ray J Hopes To Find Love And A 'Strong Woman' On His Own Reality Series

51 Minds/VH1

▲ Ray J, surrounded by contestants on his upcoming show "For The Love Of Ray J," said that his appeal is "I just keep it real. I don't tell a woman what she wants to hear. I tell them what I feel. I'm a cool person and not arrogant or cocky."

Recently celebrating his 28th birthday, singer-actor Ray J says that he's now starting to focus on his future and is trying to find a good woman that he can share it with.

"I feel like I've gotten everything out with my wild side. I've seen it all. It's time to settle down," said the performer who has been in high-profile relationships with everyone ranging from Whitney Houston, Kim Kardashian and Lil' Kim to even Karrine Steffans.

On Feb. 2, with the premiere of his VH1 reality series "For The Love Of Ray J," Brandy's little brother hopes to take things to the next level as 14 unknowns vie for his affection.

"I like a woman that's sexy and has that wild, crazy side to her, but at the same time I want her to have that classy, positive side as well," he said. "I want a lady in the street and a freak in the sheet. I want her to have a balance. I just want a wholesome, down girl. Hopefully, I'll find it."

He describes his show as "the Blachelor," a Black version of ABC's "The Bachelor."

Promising that the show will have "some twists and turns," he said, "I don't know if I'm going to settle down and if she's the one. Hell, I don't know if I'll find a girl on the show. That's the challenge."

Recently buying into Club Poetry, an urban, hip-hop club in Las Vegas, Ray J said he's also releasing an album on his independent label, Knockout Entertainment. A previous song, *Sexy Can I*, went multiplatinum. He's hoping his new single, *Sex In The Rain*, will do the same.

"It's about being in a relationship in good and bad. Some people like to get wet, some people like to stay dry. But you gotta keep on your raincoat and your rain boots," he laughed.

—Margena A. Christian

ThePlayList

A weekly ranking of the hottest Blacks in R&B, hip-hop and rap, according to radio airplay, CD sales, ringtones or single downloads.

Top R&B CDs

1. **SOUL**
   Seal
2. **SPIRIT**
   Leona Lewis
3. **I AM...SASHA FIERCE**
   Beyoncé
4. **THE BALLADS**
   Mariah Carey
5. **GOOD GIRL GONE BAD: RELOADED**
   Rihanna

Source: Amazon.com as of 1/26/09

Leona Lewis

Top Hip-Hop & Rap CDs

1. **808S & HEARTBREAK**
   Kanye West
2. **THA CARTER III**
   Lil Wayne
3. **PAPER TRAIL**
   T.I.
4. **READY TO DIE – THE REMASTER**
   The Notorious B.I.G.
5. **THEATER OF THE MIND**
   Ludacris

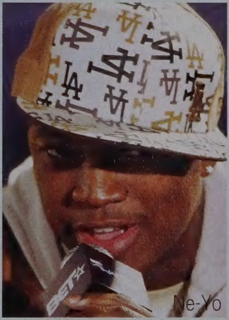
Source: iTunes.com as of 1/26/09

Kanye West

Top R&B Downloads

1. **RIGHT NOW (NA NA NA)**
   Akon
2. **MAD**
   Ne-Yo
3. **BEAUTIFUL**
   Akon, Colby O'Donis & Kardinal Offshall
4. **I'M SO PAID**
   Akon, Lil Wayne & Young Jeezy
5. **GREEN LIGHT**
   John Legend (f/André 3000)

Source: iTunes.com as of 1/26/09


Ne-Yo

Top Radio Airplay

1. **POP CHAMPAGNE**
   Jim Jones & Ron Browz (f/J. Santana), Koch/Columbia
2. **SINGLE LADIES (PUT A RING ON IT)**
   Beyoncé, Music World/Columbia
3. **HEARTLESS**
   Kanye West
   Roc-A-Fella/Def Jam/IDJMG
4. **LIVE YOUR LIFE**
   T.I. (f/Rihanna)
   Grand Hustle/Atlantic

Beyoncé

5. **SHE'S GOT HER OWN**
   Ne-Yo, Def Jam/IDJMG
6. **CHOPPED N SKREWED**
   T-Pain (f/Ludacris)
   Konvict/Jive/JLG
7. **DIVA**
   Beyoncé, Columbia
8. **JUST LIKE ME**
   Jamie Foxx (f/T.I.), J/RMG
9. **ROCKIN' THAT THANG**
   The-Dream, Def Jam/IDJMG
10. **TRADING PLACES**
    Usher, LaFace/JLG

Source: Mediabase

Download our playlist at EbonyJET.com

Sean Combs as Derek Powell and **David Caruso** as Horatio Caine on "CSI: Miami," a drama that follows a South Florida team of forensic investigators who use both cutting-edge scientific methods and old-fashioned police work to solve crimes (Monday, Feb. 9 at 10:00 p.m., ET) CBS.

Cliff Lipson/CBS

'CSI: Miami'

Vanessa Williams on "Ugly Betty" (Thursday, Feb. 5 at 8:00 p.m., ET) ABC.

Denzel Washington, **Forest Whitaker**, **Kimberly Elise**, **Gina Ravera**, **Jurnee Smollett** and **Nate Parker** in *The Great Debaters* (Friday, Feb. 6 at 6:45 p.m., ET) Showtime.

Ray J on "For The Love Of Ray J" (Friday, Feb. 6 at 10:00 p.m., ET) VH1.

Unforgivable Blackness: The Rise and Fall of Jack Johnson, a film that chronicles the life and career of Jack Johnson, the first African-American heavyweight champion (Sunday, Feb. 8 at 1:00 p.m., ET) PBS (check your local listings).

Jennifer Hudson, **Lil Wayne**, **Mariah Carey** and **B.B. King** on "The 51st Annual Grammy Awards" (Sunday, Feb. 8 at 8:00 p.m., ET) CBS.

Gabrielle Union (host), **Mary J. Blige**, **Tyler Perry**, **Judith Jamison**, **Earvin "Magic" Johnson**, Congressman **James E. Clyburn** and **B. Smith** on "The BET Honors" (Monday, Feb. 9 at 9:00 p.m., ET) BET.

Lance Reddick on "Fringe" (Tuesday, Feb. 10 at 9:00 p.m., ET) FOX.

Wesley Snipes in *The Art of War* (Wednesday, Feb. 11 at 8:00 p.m., ET) Cinemax.

Harvard professor **Henry Louis Gates Jr.** hosts "Looking for Lincoln" (Wednesday, Feb. 11 at 9:00 p.m., ET) PBS (check your local listings).

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